ADVENTURES AND ENTHUSIASMS

E. V. LUCAS

WITHDRAWN

ADVENTURES AND ENTHUSIASMS

E. V. LUCAS

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See "The Innocent's Progress"—Plate 2

ADVENTURES AND ENTHUSIASMS

BY

E. V. LUCAS

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ADVENTURES AND ENTHUSIASMS

ADVENTURES AND ENTHUSIASMS

THE PERFECT GUEST

THERE are certain qualities that we all claim. We are probably wrong, of course, but we deceive ourselves into believing that, short as we may fall in other ways, we really can do this or that superlatively well. "I'll say this for myself," we remark, with an approving glance in the mirror, "at any rate I'm a good listener"; or, "Whatever I may not be, I'm a good host." These are things that may be asserted of oneself, by oneself, without undue conceit. "I pride myself on being a wit," a man may not say; or "I am not ashamed of being the handsomest man in London;" but no one resents the tone of those other arrogations, even if their truth is denied.

It is less common, although also unobjectionable, to hear people felicitate with themselves

on being good guests. Indeed, I have lately met two or three who quite impenitently asserted the reverse; and I believe that I am of their company. Trying very hard to be good I can never lose sight of the fact that my host's house is not mine. Fixed customs must be surrendered, lateness must become punctuality, cigarette ends must not burn the mantelpiece, one misses one's own China tea. The bathroom is too far and other people use it. There is no hook for the strop. In short, to be a really good guest and at ease under alien roofs it is necessary, I suspect, to have no home ties of one's own; certainly to have no very tyrannical habits.

I cut recently from the *Spectator* this rhymed analysis of the perfect guest:

> She answered, by return of post,
> The invitation of her host;
> She caught the train she said she would,
> And changed at junctions as she should;
> She brought a small and lightish box,
> And keys belonging to the locks.
> Food, rare and rich, she did not beg,
> But ate the boiled or scrambled egg;
> When offered lukewarm tea she drank it,
> And did not crave an extra blanket,
> Nor extra pillows for her head;
> She seemed to like the spare-room bed.
> She brought her own self-filling pen,
> And always went to bed at ten.

She left no little things behind,
But stories new and gossip kind.

Those verses seem to me to cover the ground, although one might want a change here and there. For example, would a little spice of malice in her anecdotage be so undesirable? And a little less meekness in the lady, who comes out rather as a poor relation, might do no harm. They also might emphasize the point that she was never indisposed, for it is an unpardonable offence in a guest to be ill; that she spent a great deal of time in writing letters (which all hostesses like their guests to do); and that on returning home she sat down and composed a "roofer" in the warmest possible terms. They might touch lightly but feelingly on her readiness not only to eat what was offered, and not to desire luxuries, but to refuse the rarities, such as, in recent times, bacon and butter and sugar. ("Oh, no, I never take butter!"—what grateful words to fall on a hostess's ear!) One would not, however, have one's guest a vegetarian, because that way distraction lies. If vegetarians ate vegetables all might be well, but they don't; they want made dishes of an exotic nature, or hostesses think they do, and then the cook gives notice. The verses might also refer to the perfect guest's easy flow of conversation when neighbouring bores call; and last—but

how far from least!—they might note the genuine ring in her voice when she volunteers to do a little weeding.

But the lines, as far as they go, are comprehensive; their defect is that they deal with but one type—a woman visiting in the country. There is also to be considered the woman from the country visiting in town, who, to be perfect, must not insist too strongly on her own choice of play, must not pine inordinately for dances, and must not bring more frocks than her hostess can keep pace with. Mention of the hostess reminds me that it is by a hostess that the verses obviously were written, and that, as such, they leave apertures which the arrows of censure might penetrate if we were considering the perfect hostess too. For how could the poet, for all her epigrammatic conciseness, ever have given her exemplary friend the opportunity of drinking lukewarm tea? In any catalogue of the perfect hostess's virtues a very high place must be reserved for that watchfulness over the teapot and the bell that prevents such a possibility. And the perfect hostess is careful, by providing extra blankets, to make craving for more unnecessary. She also places by the bed biscuits, matches, and a volume either of O. Henry or "Saki," or both.

THE SPARROWS' FRIEND

IF you entered the Tuileries any fine morning (and surely the sun always shines in Paris, does it not?) by the gate opposite Frémiet's golden arrogant Joan of Arc, and turned into the gardens opposite the white Gambetta memorial, you were certain to see a little knot of people gathered around an old gentleman in a black slouch hat, with a deeply furrowed melancholy face, a heavy moustache, and the big comfortable slippers of one who (like so many a wise Frenchman) prefers comfort to conventionality or the outraged opinion of others. All about him, pecking among the grass of the little enclosed lawns, or in the gravel path at his feet, or fluttering up to his hands and down again, were sparrows—*les moineaux:* for this was M. Pol, the famous *"Charmeur d'oiseaux."*

There is a certain attraction about Nôtre Dame, its gloom, its purple glass and its history; Sainte Chapelle is not without a polished beauty; the Louvre contains a picture or two and a statue or two that demand to be seen and seen again; but this old retired civil servant with

the magic power over the *gamins* of the Parisian roadways and chimney-stacks was far more magnetic to many a tourist. Those other of Baedeker's lions were permanent and would endure, but a frowsy furrowed old man in scandalous footwear who not only charmed the sparrows but quite clearly had confidential understandings with each was a marvel indeed and not to be missed. Nôtre Dame's twin towers on each side of that miracle of a rose window would be there next time; but would M. Pol? That is how we reasoned.

We did well to see him as often as we could, for he is now no more; he died in 1918.

For some time the old man had been missing from his accustomed haunts, through blindness, and Death found him at his home at Chandon-Lagache, in the midst of the composition of rhymes about his little friends, which had long been his hobby, and took him quite peacefully.

I have stood by M. Pol for hours, hoping to acquire something of his mystery; but these things come from within. He knew many of the birds by name, and he used to level terrible charges against them, as facetious uncles do with little nephews and nieces; but more French in character, that is all. One very innocent mite—or as innocent as a Paris sparrow can be—was branded as L'Alcoolique. Never was a

bird less of an inebriate, but no crumb or grain could it get except upon the invitation, *"Viens, prendre ton Pernod!"* Another was Marguerite, saucy baggage; another, La Comtesse; another, L'Anglais, who was addressed in an approximation to our own tongue. Now and then among the pigmies a giant pigeon would greedily stalk: welcome too. But it was with his sparrows that M. Pol was at his best—remonstrative, minatory, caustic; but always humorous, always tender beneath.

Latterly he sold a postcard now and then, with himself photographed on it amid verses and birds; but that was a mere side issue. Often strangers would engage him in conversation, and he would reply with the ready irony of France; but he displayed little interest. His heart was with those others. One felt that the more he saw of men the more he liked sparrows.

The French have a genius for gay commemorative sculpture. If a statue of M. Pol were set up on the scene of his triumphs (and many things are less likely), with little bronze *moineaux* all about him, I for one should often make it an object of pilgrimage.

THE GOLDEN EAGLE

MR. GEORGE ROBEY, C.B.E., our *soi-disant* Prime Minister of Mirth, is, in his songs, as a rule, more of a destructive than a reassuring philosopher. Indeed, the cheerful cynicism of one whose prosperity is invulnerable may be said to be his prevailing characteristic on the stage. But he once sang, in the person of a landlady, a song which had the refrain, calculated to comfort those in less happy circumstances, "It's a blessing that you never miss the things you've never had." Upon the respective merits of this sentiment and of Tennyson's famous dictum "'Tis better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all" much might be said in discussion, although the two statements are not antagonistic; but at the moment, thinking of my poor friend the Golden Eagle, I vote wholly for Mr. Robey's optimism. It is a blessing that we never miss the things we've never had, and, conversely, it is a real calamity to lose something and be unable to forget it or to cease to regret it. In other words, it is better not to have had a treasure than, being

parted from it, to be eternally wistful. Better, that is, for unwilling auditors of the tragedy.

So much for prelude.

It is a hard thing to be credited with power that one does not possess and have to disappoint a simple soul who is relying on one's help. That is a general proposition, but I was reminded of the Golden Eagle and a particular application of it by the remark which some one dropped the other day about Baedeker. "Shall those of us who have kept our Baedekers have the courage to carry them?" she asked; and instantly my mind flew to a certain Italian city and the host of the Aquila d'Oro.

Never can any guest in a hotel have received so much attention from the host as I did in the few days of my sojourn with him before I could bring myself to change to another. And not only from the host, but from every one on the staff, who bent earnest glances on me from morning till night. The Golden Eagle himself, however, did more than that: he buttonholed me. He was always somewhere near the door when I went out and again when I came in: a large, flabby Italian, usually in his shirt sleeves and wearing the loose slippers that strike such dismay into British travellers. "No foreigner," said an acute young observer to me recently, "ever has a good dog"; not less true is it that

no Latin is ever soundly shod. But the Golden Eagle was not exactly slovenly; he owed it to his hotel not to be that; he was merely a vigilant *padrone* eternally concerned with his business.

Although there were other people staying under his roof, and they had better rooms than I and drank a better wine, it was I at whom he made this set. It was I for whom he waited and upon whom his great melancholy eyes rested so wistfully. For he was a Golden Eagle with a grievance, and I, in whose bedroom he had been asked to place a writing-table, I, who never went out without a note-book and who bought so many photographs, I, who so obviously was engaged in studying the city, no doubt for the purposes of a book, I it was who beyond question was in a position, by removing that grievance, to restore him to prosperity and placidity again.

And his grievance? The melancholy stamped upon that vast white countenance, although much of it was temperamental, and you might say national (for the Italian features in repose suggest disillusionment and fatalism far oftener than light-heartedness), and the dejection in the great shoulders, were due to the same cause. Baedeker, after years of honourable mention of the Aquila d'Oro among the hotels of the city, had suddenly, in the last edition, removed the

asterisk against the name. The Golden Eagle had lost his star. Now you see the connection between this pathetic innkeeper (the last man in the world to call Boniface), our triumphant *lion comique* and the late Lord Tennyson. But in his case it was not better, either for him or me, that he had lost what he had loved. It would have been better, both for him and for me, if he had never had a star.

Why it had been taken from him he had no notion. He had always done his best; his wife had done her best; people were satisfied and came again; but the star had gone. Was not his hotel clean? The linen was soft, the attendance was good. He himself—as I could perceive, could I not?—never rested, nor did his wife. They personally superintended all. They spared nothing for the comfort of the house. Foolish innkeepers no doubt existed who were cheese-parers, but not he. He knew that wherever else economy was wise, it was not in the dining-room. Were not the meals generous and diversified? Could I name a more abundant *collazione* at 4 *lire* or a better *pranzo* at 5? Or served with more despatch? Was not his wine sound and far from dear?

And yet, four years ago, and all inexplicably, the star had gone from his hotel. It was mon-

strous, an outrage. Four years ago—without warning and for no cause.

When he had looked at the new edition of Baedeker which a visitor had left about and saw it, he could not believe his eyes. He had called his wife—every one: they also were incredulous. It was like a thunderbolt, an earthquake. After all their hard work too, their desire to please, their regular customers, so contented, who came again and again. Was not that the test—that they came again and again? Obviously then the guide-book was wrong, guilty of a wicked injustice.

What did he think could have happened? All he could suppose was that one of Herr Baedeker's agents, staying there incognito, had had some piece of bad fortune; some accident of the kitchen impossible to prevent, but isolated, had occurred and he had taken offence. But how unfair! No one should judge by a single lapse. So many rivals still with stars and he without!

Thus would the Golden Eagle complain, day after day, during my sojourn, always ending with the assurance that I would help him to get the star back, would I not?—I who had such influence.

And now there is to be, I suppose, a new system of guide-book astronomy. If the Golden Eagle has survived the War he may, in the

eclipse of Baedeker, be more resigned to his lot: the substitute for that travelling companion may confer a star of his own. But I do not propose to stay with him in order to make sure.

A MORNING CALL

THE card of invitation—for which I have to confess that, like a true social climber, I had to some extent angled—came at last, stating that my visit would be expected on the following day at noon precisely, and that evening dress was to be worn. As I did not receive it until late at night, and as some medals had to be bought and a carriage and pair hired, I was busy enough after breakfast. The medals were for distribution afterwards among certain intimates, and the carriage and pair was to convey my friend and me to the reception, because we wished to enter at the gate of honour, and if you would do this you must have two horses. A single horse, and you are deposited at an inferior door and have a long walk.

It was to one of the most famous buildings in the world that we were going—possibly the most famous—and the horses' hoofs had a brave resonance (not wholly to be dissociated from thoughts of Dumas) as they clattered swiftly over the stones, beneath archways, past sentries, and through spacious and venerable courtyards,

to the foot of the famous stairway. After ascending to an ante-room, where colossal guards scrutinised us and splendid lackeys took our hats, we were shown into the reception-room, in the doorway of which an elderly gentleman in black with a black bag was talking with such animation to a major-domo that we had to interrupt them in order to pass.

In this reception-room, an apartment of some splendour, in which we were to meet our host, sufficient guests had already assembled to occupy most of the wall space—for that is how we were placed, in four lines with our backs to the walls. There were about ninety in all, I calculated, of whom many were priests and nuns and many were women, the rest youths, a few girls, and a very few civilian men. It needed only the swiftest glance to discern that my friend and I were the only ones who had complied with the regulation about evening dress. This, naturally, greatly increased our comfort, since we became at once the cynosure (as the learned would say) of every eye. In the centre of the room was a little knot of officials, including four or five soldiers, all chatting in low tones and occasionally glancing through the door opposite that by which we had entered, which gave upon a long corridor. So for some twenty minutes we waited, nervous and whispering, when

suddenly the officials stiffened, the soldiers hurriedly fetched their rifles from the far corner (a proceeding not without humour when one considers all things), and the whole ninety of us sank on our knees as a little quick, dark man, dressed in white, entered the room.

To be on one's knees, in evening dress, at twenty past twelve in the day, facing a row of people, across a vast expanse of carpet, similarly kneeling, and being also a little self-conscious and hungry, is not conducive to minute observation; but I was able to notice that our host was alert and bird-like in his movements and had a searching, shrewd, and very rapid and embracive glance. Beneath his cassock one caught sight of elaborate slippers, and he wore a large and magnificent emerald ring.

As he was late he got briskly to work. Each person had to be noticed individually, but some had brought a little problem on which advice was needed; others required solace for the absent and afflicted; most, like myself, had medals of the saints which were to be made more efficacious; and three or four of the priests were accompanied by far from negligible or indigent old lady parishioners, to whom such an event as this would be the more memorable and valuable if a little conversation could be added. Hence, there was work before our host; but he per-

formed his task with noticeable discretion. To me, whom at last he reached, he said nothing; but my friend, who is of the old persuasion, put to him the case of a dying youth and obtained sufficient assurance to be comforted. And all the while I could see the elderly gentleman in black with the black bag glancing round the walls from the doorway—his function, as I afterwards learned, being that of a doctor intent upon restoring to consciousness those (and they are numerous) who swoon under the immensity of this ceremony.

Having come to the last of his visitors, our host retired to the middle of the room and delivered a short address on the meaning of his blessing and the importance of rectitude. He then blessed us once again, collectively, and was gone, and we struggled to a vertical position, the elderly ladies finding the assistance of their attendant priests more than useful in this process.

My knees, too, were very sore; but what did I care? I had seen Pope Benedict XV.

THE TRUE WIZARD OF THE NORTH

IT is no disrespect to the author of the Waverley Novels to say that the true Wizard of the North was born on a Sunday in 1805, in a cobbler's cottage at Odense, in Denmark, when Scott was thirty-four.

Hans Christian Andersen's father, a cobbler, was a thoughtful, original, and eccentric man—as cobblers have the chance to be. On the day that his little Hans was born, he sat by the bedside and read to the child Holberg's "Comedies." It made no difference that the audience only cried. Later the father became his son's devoted slave and companion, reading to him the "Arabian Nights," constructing puppet theatres and other entertaining devices, and entrusting him with his peculiar views of the world and religion. The mother was, in the words of Mary Howitt, Hans Andersen's first English translator, "all heart"; from her perhaps came his instant readiness to feel with others, his overmastering sense of pity, his smiling tears, while from his father much of his odd humour and irony. But there was still another influence.

Like a child of genius of our own race with whom Hans Andersen has not a little in common, Charles Lamb (who in 1805 was thirty), the boy was much with his grandmother, his father's mother, a distressful gentlewoman who, having come upon evil days, lived in great poverty with an insane husband, a toy-maker, and kept the home together by acting as gardener to a lunatic asylum. To little Hans, who was often with her, she would tell stories of her own youth and that of her mother, who had done an extremely Andersenian thing—had run away from a rich home to marry a comedian.

Now and then Hans would accompany her to the asylum itself. "All such patients," he has written, in "The True Story of My Life," "as were harmless were permitted to go freely about the Court; they often came to us in the garden, and with curiosity and terror I listened to them and followed them about; nay, I even ventured so far as to go with the attendants to those who were raving mad. . . . Close beside the place where the leaves were burned the poor old women had their spinning-room. I often went in there and was very soon a favourite. . . . I passed for a remarkably wise child who would not live long; and they rewarded my eloquence by telling me tales in return; and thus a world as rich as that of the 'Thousand and One

Nights' was revealed to me. The stories told by these old ladies, and the insane figures which I saw around me in the asylum, operated in the meantime so powerfully upon me that when it grew dark I scarcely dared to go out of the house."

Here, given a sensitive, imaginative nature, we have material enough to build up much of the genius of Hans Christian Andersen. How could he have been very different from what he was, one asks, with such companions and surroundings in the most impressionable years—an embittered whimsical father, full of the "Arabian Nights," a mother "all heart," a grandmother all romantic memory, a mad, toy-making grandfather, and these wool-gathering old ladies inventing strange histories to amuse him? And, added to all this, circumstances of poverty to drive his thoughts inwards? Poets, it would almost seem, can be both made as well as born.

But the boy had still more luck; for he struck up an acquaintance, ripening into friendship, with a man who carried out play-bills, "and he gave me one every day. With this, I seated myself in a corner and imagined an entire play, according to the name of the piece and the characters in it. This was my first, unconscious poetizing." A little later a clergyman's widow gave the boy the freedom of her library (as

Samuel Salt gave his to the little Charles Lamb), and there he first read Shakespeare: "I saw Hamlet's ghost, and lived upon the hearth with Lear. The more persons died in a play, the more interesting I thought it. At this time I wrote my first piece; it was nothing less than a tragedy, wherein, as a matter of course, everybody died. The subject of it I borrowed from an old song about Pyramus and Thisbe; but I had increased the incidents through a hermit and his son, who both loved Thisbe, and who both killed themselves when she died. Many speeches of the hermit were passages from the Bible, taken out of the Little catechism, especially from our duty to our neighbours." Later the boy wrote a drama with a king and queen in it, and, feeling himself at fault as to the language of courts, produced a German-French-English-and-Danish lexicon, and took a word out of each language to lend the royal speeches an air.

Hans Andersen's father dying when the boy was still young, the mother married again, and Hans was left even more to himself. He read and wrote and recited all day, so that it became generally understood that he was to be a poet; and as nothing is so absurd to the eyes of healthy normal boys as a poet, he was the victim of not a little ridicule. His mother's wish to apprentice

him to a tailor precipitated his fate. Rather than that he would go, he declared, to Copenhagen and join the theatre. To deny her son anything was beyond her power; but she was happier about it after consulting a witch and receiving from the coffee-grounds and the cards the assurance (afterwards realised) that he would become a great man, and that in honour of him Odense would one day be illuminated. And so at the age of fourteen, with thirty shillings and a bundle of clothes, Hans Christian Andersen arrived in Copenhagen to seek his fortune.

On that day his childhood was over. Some one has said that nothing that really counts ever happens to us after the teens are reached, and it is more true than not. At Copenhagen, Hans Andersen, young as he was, forsook the world of fantasy and entered the world of fact. The dancer to whom he had an introduction laughed at him; he was repulsed from the theatre. For four or five years he starved and suffered. His singing and his passion for reciting, however, gained him a few friends to set against poverty and the ridicule which his earnest enthusiasm, uncouth lanky figure, and long nose brought him almost everywhere that he went. Among them were Weyse, the composer, Sibonia, the singer, and Guldborg, the

poet, through whose interests the boy was able to take lessons in singing and dancing, and even to make his theatrical début in the chorus. It was the composition of a tragedy that decided his fate and made his fortune, for it came into the hands of Jonas Collin, director of the Royal Theatre, brought him the interest of that influential man, and led to the Royal Grant which sent the young author to the Latin School at Skagelse for a period of three years.

In 1829 he published his first characteristic work, the "Journey on Foot from Holm Canal to the East Point of Armager," a very youthful tissue of grotesque humour and impudence. A desultory year or two followed, when he wrote much and came in for a quite undue share of attack, which his sensitive nature began to construe as a death-warrant; and then, in 1833, again through Collin, a travelling grant of £70 a year for two years was obtained for him from Frederick VI, and he set off for Paris. With that journey his true career began, the success of which was never to be chequered save by occasional fits of depression following upon hostile criticism. From Paris he went to Rome, where he met Thorwaldsen and wrote his first and best known novel, "The Improvisatore," an intense and fanciful story of Rome and the stage, marked by much tender charm, and, like

the writer's mother, "all heart," in which an autobiographical thread is woven. The novel had an immediate success, and Hans Andersen suddenly found himself one of the leading Danish authors.

But not yet was his real work begun. His real work was the telling of fairy tales—or "Eventyr og Historier," as he called them—the first of which were published in a slender volume in 1835, a little after "The Improvisatore," under the title "Fairy Tales as Told to Children." Since in this book were "The Tinder Box," "Little Claus and Big Claus," "The Princess and the Pea," and "Little Ida's Flowers," it will be seen that Hans Andersen entered the arena fully armed. Next year came the second part, containing "Thumbelina," "The Travelling Companion," and "The Naughty Boy," and in 1837 a third part, with "The Little Mermaid" and "The Emperor's New Clothes." Hans Andersen himself, whose constant ambition (again like Lamb) was to write successfully for the stage, thought but little of these stories, which presented no difficulties to his pen. He preferred (authors often being their own worst judges) his novels, his poems, his travels; above all, he preferred his dramatic efforts; and yet it is by these tales that he lives and will ever live.

Hans Andersen now began to travel regularly every year and to write little personal memoirs of his adventures in a manner which in England to-day we associate with "Eöthen" and "An Inland Voyage." Wherever he went he made friends, and he was always willing—more, eager—to read his stories aloud: even in Germany, where, owing to his defective knowledge of the language, his audiences had difficulty in maintaining the cast of feature demanded by this most exacting of literary lions. In 1847 he was in London, much fêted, the way having been paved by Mary Howitt's translation of his autobiography and of "The Improvisatore," and in 1857 he was here again, spending five weeks at Gad's Hill with Dickens (by seven years his junior), whom he revered and almost worshipped. Hans Andersen's Anglo-Saxon readers have always been very numerous and very appreciative, and in return he praised England and wrote "The Two Baronesses" in our tongue. Only a few months before his death he was gratified to receive a gift of books from the children of America.

His latter years were full of honour and comfort. He had many wealthy friends, including the Danish Royal Family, a substantial pension, and a considerable revenue from his work. In the summer he lived with the Melchiors at

Rolighet; in winter in rooms in Copenhagen, dining with a different friend regularly each night of the week. His health was better than he liked to think it, and he was able almost to the end to indulge his passion for travel. He went often to the theatre, or, if unable to do so, had the play bill brought to his rooms, where, knowing every classic play by heart, he would follow its course in imagination, assisted by occasional visits from the performers. He never married, and, when once an early and not very serious attachment was forgotten, never seemed to wish it; but he liked to be liked by women. Indeed, he was normal enough to like to be liked by every one, and most of the unhappiness of which he was capable—even to a kind of self-torture—proceeded from the suspicion that he was unwelcome here and there. For in spite of his hard experience of the world, he continued a child to the end; a spoilt child, indeed, more than not, as men of genius often can be.

He lived to be seventy, and died peacefully on August 4, 1875. "Take care, above all things," he had once said when humorously discussing his funeral, "that you drill a little hole in my coffin, so that I may have a peep at all the pomp and ceremony, and see which of my good friends follow me to the grave and which do

not." They were there, every one. He was followed to the grave by all Denmark.

It is, as I have said, by his fairy tales that Hans Andersen lives and will ever live. There he stands alone, supreme. As a whole, there is nothing like them. One man of genius or another has now and then done something a little in this or that Hans Andersen manner. Heine here and there in the "Reisebilder"; Lamb in "The Child Angel" and perhaps "Dream Children"; and one sees affinities to him occasionally in Sir James Barrie's work (the swallows in "The Little White Bird," for example, build under the eaves to hear the stories which are told to the children in the house, while in Hans Andersen's "Thumbelina" the swallows live under the poet's eaves in order to tell stories to him); but Hans Andersen remains one of the most unique and fascinating minds in all literature. Nominally just entertainment for children, these "Eventyr og Historier" are a profound study of the human heart and a "criticism of life" beyond most poetry. And all the while they are stories for children too; for though Hans Andersen addresses both audiences, he never, save in a very few of the slighter satirical apologues, such as "The Collar" and "Soup from a Sausage Skewer," loses the younger. He had this double appeal in mind when, on a

statue being raised in his honour at Copenhagen just before his death, showing him in the act of telling a tale to a cluster of children, he protested that it was not representative enough.

I would apply to Hans Andersen rather than to Scott the term "The Wizard of the North"; because whereas Scott took men and women as he found them, the other, with a touch of his wand, rendered inhuman things—furniture, toys, flowers, poultry—instinct with humanity. He knew actually how everything would behave; he knew how a piece of coal talked, and how a nightingale. He did not merely give speech to a pair of scissors, he gave character too. This was one of his greatest triumphs. He discerned instantly the relative social positions of moles and mice, bulls and cocks, tin soldiers and china shepherdesses. He peopled a new world, and, having done so, he made every incident in it dramatic and unforgettable. He brought to his task of amusing and awakening children gifts of humour and irony, fancy and charm, the delicacy of which will probably never be surpassed. He brought also an April blend of tears and smiles, and a very tender sympathy with all that is beautiful and all that is oppressed. He did not preach, or, if he did, he so quickly rectified the lapse with a laugh or a quip that one forgets

the indiscretion; but he believed that only the good are happy, and he wanted happiness to be universal. Hence to read his tales is an education in optimism and benevolence.

INNOCENCE AND IMPULSE

LOOKING the other day into Grimm, I came upon the story called "Hans in Luck," in which a foolish fellow, having his life's savings in a bag, gives them away for an old horse, and the old horse for a cow, and the cow for a pig, and so on, until at last he has only a heavy stone to his name, and, getting rid of that burden, thinks himself the most fortunate of men—Hans in luck. It was the very ordinary metal of this folk-tale which Hans Andersen transmuted to fine gold in the famous story entitled, in the translation on which I was brought up, "What the old man does is always right," which is a veritable epic in little of simplicity and enthusiasm. No one who has read it can forget it, for its exquisite author is there at his kindliest and sunniest, all his sardonic melancholy forgotten.

The old man, in bitter financial straits, setting out in the morning to sell his cow at market, makes, in his incorrigible optimism, a series of exchanges, all for the worse, so that when he reaches home in the evening, instead of a pocket-

ful of money to show for his day's dealings, he has only a sack of rotten apples. Nothing, however, has dimmed his radiant faith in himself as a good trafficker, and nothing can undermine his wife's belief in him as the best and financially most sagacious of husbands: a belief which, expressed in the presence of two gentlemen who, having had a wager on her unshakeable loyalty, had come to the house to settle it, led to the old couple's enrichment and assured prosperity.

It was this charming story which came to my mind in the train the other day as I looked at the young sandy-haired and freckled soldier opposite me on the journey to Portsmouth, for here was another example of impulsive simplicity. On the back of his right hand was tattooed a very red heart, emitting effulgence, across which two hands were clasped, and beneath were the words "True Love"; and on the back of his left hand was tattooed the head of a girl. He was perhaps twenty. Should there be no more wars to trouble the world, I thought, as from time to time I glanced at him, he will probably live to be seventy. Since tattoo marks never come out and the backs of one's hands are usually visible to oneself, he is likely to have some curious thoughts as he passes down the years. What kind of emotions, I wondered, will be his as he views them at thirty-one, forty-one,

fifty-one? And supposing that this first love fails, what will be the attitude of subsequent ladies to these embellishments? For it would probably be in vain, even if he were sophisticated enough to think of it, for him to maintain that the decoration was purely symbolic, the right-hand device standing for devotion and the left for woman in the abstract. That would hardly wash. Subsequent ladies—and judging from his appearance and his early start there are sure to be some—may give him rather a difficult time.

It all goes to prove what a dangerous thing impulse can be. And yet as I looked at his simple face, and reflected on what safe areas of normally-hidden epidermis he possessed for such pictorial ebullition, I found myself envying such a lack of self-protectiveness; and I asked myself if, after all, those who will have nothing to do with self-protectiveness are not the salt of the earth. The gamblers, the careless, the sippers of all the honey the moment contains: are not these the best?

Most young ardencies are not as reckless as his—and, of course, it may all end happily: what the young man did may turn out also to be right. With all my heart I hope so.

LAURA RISES FOR THE DAY

See "The Innocent's Progress"—Plate 1

POSSESSIONS

SOME one has offered me a very remarkable and beautiful and valuable gift—and I don't know what to do. A few years ago I should have accepted it with rapture. To-day I hesitate, because the older one grows the less does one wish to accumulate possessions.

It is said that the reason why Jews so often become fishmongers and fruiterers and dealers in precious stones is because in every child of Israel there is a subconscious conviction that at any moment he may be called upon to return to his country, and naturally wishing to lose as little as possible by a sudden departure he chooses to traffic either in a stock which he can carry on his person, such as diamonds, or in one which, being perishable and renewable day by day, such as fruit and fish, can be abandoned at any moment with almost no loss at all. Similarly the Jews are said to favour such household things as can be easily removed: rugs, for example, rather than carpets. I have not, so far as I know, any Jewish blood, but in the few years that are left me I too want to be ready to obey the impulse towards whatever Jerusalem I hear calling me, even should it be the platonically-

loved city itself, although that is unlikely. Without possessions one would be the readier also for the longer last journey. Naked we come into this world and naked we should go. Nor should we wilfully add to the difficulties of leaving it.

I was lately led by its owner, rebuilder, and renovator through the rooms and gardens of a Tudor house which, with infinite thought and discretion, has been reclaimed from decay and made modernly debonair. At every step, indoors and out, was something charming or adequate, whether furniture or porcelain, whether flower or shrub. Within were long cool passages where through the diamond panes sunlight splashed on the white walls, and bedrooms of the gayest daintiness; without were lawns, and vistas, and arrangements of the loveliest colours. "Well," my hostess asked me, "what do you think of it all?" I thought many things, but the one which was uppermost was this: "You are making it very hard to die."

I had a grandfather who, after he had reached a certain age, used birthdays as occasions on which to give away rather than receive presents; and I am sure he was right. But I would go beyond that. The presents which he distributed were bought for the purpose. I would fix a period in life when the wise man should begin

to unload his acquisitions—accumulating only up to that point and then dispersing among the young. Ah! but you say, why be so illogical? If possessions are undesirable, are they not undesirable also for the young? Well, there are answers to that. For one thing, who said anything about being logical? And then, are we not all different? Because I choose to cease accumulating, that is no reason why others, who like to increase their possessions, should cease also. And again, even I, with all my talk of renunciation, have not suggested that it should begin till a middling period has been reached; and I am all for circulating *objets d'art*, too. I should like a continual progression of pictures and other beautiful things throughout the kingdom, so that the great towns could have the chance of seeing the best as well as London.

So far am I from withholding possessions from others, that as I walked down Bond Street the other day and paused at this window and that, filled with exquisite jewels and enamelled boxes and other voluptuous trifles, I thought how delightful it would be to be rich enough to buy them all—not to own them, but to give them away. To women for choice; to one woman for choice. And a letter which I remember receiving from France during the War had some bearing upon this aspect of the case, for it

mentioned a variety of possessions which carried with them, in the trenches, extraordinary and constant pleasure and consolation. The writer was a lady who worked at a canteen in the big Paris terminus for the front, and she said that the soldiers returning from their leave often displayed to her the mascots and other treasures which comforted them in their vigils, and with which they were always well supplied. Sometimes these possessions were living creatures. One soldier had produced from a basket a small fox which he had found and brought up, and which this lady fed with bread and milk while its owner ate his soup. Another had a starling. A third took out of his pocket a venerable handkerchief, which, on being unrolled, revealed the person of Marguerite—a magpie whom he adored, and who apparently adored him. They were inseparable. Marguerite had accompanied him into action and while he was on *permission,* and she was now cheering him on his return to the danger zone. She was placed on the table, where she immediately fell asleep; at the end of the meal the poor fellow rolled her again in the handkerchief, popped her in his pocket, and ran for his tragic train. But for the companionship of Marguerite his heart would have been far heavier; and she was thus a possession worth having.

DRAKE AND HIS GAME

THE British Navy did not begin with Drake. On consulting the authorities I find that the Navy proper, as an organization, may be said to have begun in the reign of King John, and to have been put on its modern basis by Henry VII. But Drake's is the first name to conjure with.

Any one wishing to lay a tangible tribute at the feet of Britain's earliest naval hero of world-wide fame would have to visit either the monument which was erected to him—not certainly in any indecent haste—at Tavistock, in 1883, when he had been dead for nearly two hundred and ninety years, or the replica of it, which was set up on Plymouth Hoe in the year following. To go to the Hoe is, I think, better; for at the Hoe you can look out on Drake's own sea.

London has no Drake monuments. But had a certain imaginative enthusiast had his way in the year 1581 a memorial of the great seaman, more interesting and stimulating than any statue, would have added excitement to Ludgate Hill and to every Londoner passing that way, for it was seriously proposed that the *Golden*

Hind, the vessel in which Drake sailed round the world, and the first English ship to make such a voyage, should be bodily lifted to the top of St. Paul's (which had a spire in those days) and permanently fixed there. Even had the project been carried out we personally should be none the richer, for the Fire of London was to intervene; but it was a fine idea. I wish something of the kind might still be done; for if such a fascinating little model galleon as the weathercock on Lord Astor's beautiful Embankment house by the Essex Street steps can rejoice the eyes as it does, how would not a real one, high over Ludgate Hill, quicken the mind and the pulse?

And we ought in London to think far more of ships than we do. By ships we live, whether merchant ships bringing us food, or ironclads preserving those ships; and not only should the docks be known to Londoners, instead of being, as now, foreign parts infinitely more remote than, say, Brighton, but the Navy should visit us too. The old *Britannia* ought to have been brought to the Thames when she was superannuated. "There," the guides should have been able to say, "was the training college of our admirals. There, in that hulk, Beatty learned to navigate, Sturdee to tie knots, and Jellicoe to signal!" The *Victory* should be

brought to London, as a constant and glorious reminder of what Nelson did, before steam came in. She is wasted at Portsmouth, which is all shipping. In London, either in the Thames or on the top of St. Paul's, she would have noble results, and every errand-boy would become a stowaway, as every errand-boy should.

A second proposal, to preserve the *Golden Hind* as a ship for ever, also fell through, and she was either allowed to decay or was broken up (as the *Britannia* has been); but whereas the relics from the *Britannia* are many, the only authentic memorial of the *Golden Hind* is an arm-chair fashioned from her wood which is a valued possession of the Bodleian. Why the Bodleian, I cannot explain, for Drake was neither an Oxford graduate nor a scholar. His University was the sea.

That he was a Devonian, we know, but not much else is known. The years 1539, 1540, 1541, and 1545 all claim his birth, and the historians are at conflict as to whether his father was a parson or not. Some say that, having, owing to religious persecution, to flee to Kent, the elder Drake inhabited a hulk (like Rudder Grange), and, in the intervals of reading prayers to the sailors in the Medway, brought up his twelve sons to the sea. But that matters little; what matters is that one of his sons

became a master mariner, a buccaneer, a circumnavigator, a knight, an admiral, and in 1588 destroyed (under God) the Spanish Armada. This successful and intrepid commander was a man "of small size, with reddish beard," who treated his companions with affection, as they him with respect, and got the last drop of energy and devotion out of all. He had "every possible luxury, even to perfume," but remained hard as nails. His death came to pass off Porto Rico, whither he had been sent by Queen Elizabeth to bring back another haul of treasure from the West Indies. Hitherto he had succeeded, returning always with more spoil, but this time he succumbed to various disorders.

The waves became his winding sheet, the waters were his tomb;
But for his fame the ocean sea is not sufficient room.

Even in the six-and-thirty years that Drake has stood, in bronze, on the Hoe, he has seen wonderful changes; but had his statue been there ever since his death—as it should have been—what amazing naval developments would have passed beneath his eyes: wood to iron, canvas to paddle-wheel, paddle-wheel to screw, coal to oil, and then the submarine!

Turning from the Hoe with the intention of descending to the town by one of the paths

through the lawns at the back of the great sailor's statue, what should confront me but the most perfect bowling-green I have ever seen, with little sets of phlegmatic Devonians absorbed in their contests. Here, thought I, is, beyond praise, devotion to tradition. Of national games we have all heard, but there is something, in a way, even finer in a municipal game—and such a municipal game, the most famous of all. For years I have never heard Plymouth Hoe mentioned without thinking of Drake and the game of bowls in which he was playing, and which he refused to interrupt, when, that July afternoon, in 1588, news came that the Spaniards were off the Lizard. ("Plenty of time," he said, "to finish the game and beat the Spaniards too.") But it had never occurred to me that bowls and the Hoe were still associated. England has commonly a shorter memory than that. And, indeed, why should they be associated? There is, for example, no archery at Tell's Chapel on the shore of the Lake of Lucerne, no wood-chopping at Mount Vernon. But Devon, with excellent piety, remembers and honours its own prophet; and I now understand how it is that the Plymouth Museum should be destitute of relics of Drake. Why trouble about his personal trappings when this pleasant sward is in existence, to connect the

eye instantly with the mighty admiral at one of the most engaging moments of his life?

I stood by the railings of the green for two hours watching the latter-day Plymouth champions at their play. Only the descent of the sun and the encroaching gloom drove me away, and even then a few enthusiasts remained bowling and bowling; for every one who is devoted to bowls knows that the twilight favours form, although it does not favour the spectators. The players seemed to me to be chiefly of the mercantile class, and I wondered if among them were any of the bearers of the odd names which I had noticed above the Plymouth shops as I was drifting about its streets that morning. Were any of the great Devon tribe of Yeo there? Was Mr. Condy U'Ren winning or losing? What kind of a "wood" did Mr. Odam project towards the "jack"? Could the admirable elderly player who always lifted his right foot and held it poised in the air while delivering the bowl be Mr. Jethro Ham? I judged the players to be, in many cases, old antagonists, and these games on this sunny October afternoon merely items in a series of battles spread over years past, and to continue, I hope, for years to come; for the pastime of bowls, unlike cricket and baseball and lawn tennis, has a kindly, welcoming smile for old

age. The late Sir William Osler's rule as to forty being the culmination of man's power becomes an absurdity on the green. There, seventy is nothing. At eighty you are not necessarily to be sneezed at. Even nonagenarians, I believe, have earned the thrill contained in the phrase "Good wood!" So then I confidently expect, if I am alive, and am on Plymouth Hoe in twenty years' time, when prosperity will again be established, with amity among the nations, to find many of the same players at this at once the gentlest, but not the least exciting, of games—to me, at any rate, more exciting than horse-racing with all its speed.

They played exceedingly well, these men of Plymouth, one veteran in particular exacting a deadly amount of work out of the last four feet of the bowls' stealthy journey. And how serious they were—with their india-rubber overshoes, and a mat to start from! I doubt if Sir Francis had it all so spick-and-span—for in his day we were very nearly as far from lawn mowers as from turbines. And how intent they were on the progress not only of their own bowls but of their opponents' too—but of course with a more personal, more intimate, interest in their own, even to following its curve with their backbones, and to some extent spinally reproducing it, as conscientious players involuntarily do.

ADMIRALS ALL—TO BE

IT is fitting that the naval training college from which the English midshipmen go straight to sea should be situated in Drake's county. This means that they breathe the right air, and, through the gap made by the rocky mouth of the Dart, look out from their commanding eminence upon a triangle of the right blue water. Drake also gives his noble name to one of the Terms (or companies of cadets).

I have seen Dartmouth both at work and at play, and am still not sure which was which. Whether the boys were at football on those high table-lands where, at the first glimpse—so many players are there—all the games seem one; or cleaning boilers; or solving the problems of knots; or winding accumulators; or learning to steer; or drawing machinery sections; or poring over charts; or assembling an engine; or sailing their cutters in the Dart; or listening to signal instructors in the gun-rooms; or acquiring the principles of navigation; or collecting the constituents of a variegated tea in the canteen; or singing "God Save the King" in chapel

(all three verses); or grappling with logarithms; or swimming vociferously in the bath—whatever they are doing, there seems to be at the back of it the same spirit and zeal. Even the four or five offenders whom I saw expiating in punishment drill their most recent misdeeds appeared to have a zest.

Literature and the Navy have always had their liaison; and after studying two or three typical numbers of *The Britannia Magazine*, the organ of the cadets, I see every chance of a new crop of Captain Marryats and Basil Hoods; while there is promise of an excellent caricaturist or so, too. Compared with the ordinary run of school periodicals, this is rather striking. I fancy that I discern a fresher and more independent outlook and a rather wider range of interest. The natural history articles, for example, are unusually good, and some of the experiences of war, by midshipmen, are vivid and well done; and amid the fun and nonsense, of which there is a plentiful infusion, there is often a sagacious irony. Among this fun I find, in prose, an account of the Battle of St. Vincent, by a young disciple of George Ade, which would not disgrace a seriously comic periodical and must be quoted. Nelson, I should premise, has just defeated the Spaniards. Then—

"Say, stranger," asked H. N., as the dons mushed around with their surrenders, "is this a business proposition or a sad-faced competition at a dime show?"

"Gee-whizz!" said the Spanish Ad., "we reckon we're bored some. My name is Muckheap, and I don't seem to get gay any old way."

"Bully for you, old Corpse-face," Nels replied; "hand out your ham-carvers and then run around and fix yourself an eye-wizzler!"

And so they passed in real swift.

And did the British Fleet push in the glad cry right away when Nels put in his entrance? Why, sure!

As for the verse, which is both grave and humorous, nothing gives me more pleasure and satisfaction than the rapid but exhaustive summary of England's blockading efforts at sea in the Great War, which begins thus:

> Observe how doth the British Navy
> Baulk the Bavarian of his gravy;
> While the fat Boche from Köln to Munich
> Cannot expand to fill his tunic. . . .

The British Navy, we know, "does not advertise"; but there is no harm in its nestlings saying a good word for it now and then.

Of all the things that I saw at Dartmouth, I shall retain, I think, longest—against that comely smiling background of gay towers and brickwork on the hill—the memory of the gymnasium and the swimming bath. Compared

with Dartmouth's physical training, with its originality, ingenuity, thoroughness, and keenness, all other varieties become unintelligent and savourless. This is fitness with fun—and is there a better mixture? As for the swimming bath, it is always the abode of high spirits, but to see it at its best you must go there directly after morning service on Sunday. It is then that the boys really become porpoises—or, rather, it is then that you really understand why porpoises are always referred to as moving in "schools." I know nothing of the doctrine that is preached normally at the College, for I heard only a sermon by a visiting dignitary of notable earnestness and eloquence, but I assume it to be beyond question. If, however, a heresy should ever be propounded no harm would be done; for the waters of the swimming bath would instantly wash it away. As one of the officers remarked to me (of course in confidence), he always looked upon this after-service riot of splashing and plunging as an instinctive corrective of theological excess. On these occasions the bath becomes a very cauldron, bubbling with boy.

It was cheering indeed, as I roamed about this great competent establishment, to be conscious of such an undercurrent of content and *joie de vivre*. At Dartmouth in particular is this a mat-

ter for satisfaction, since the College is likely to be, for the boys, a last link with the land—with solid England, the England of fields and trees and games and friends—for many years. Of all boys who deserve a jolly boyhood, these naval cadets, I think, come first; for the sea is a hard mistress and they are plighted to her. Once they embark as midshipmen responsibility is upon them; none of our sons need to grow up more quickly. As to the glamour of the sea, one of the cadet poets becomes lyrical about it—"I hear," he sings:

I hear the sea a-calling,
Calling me;
Calling of its charms,
Of its tempests and its calms;
I've lived upon the mainland,
But I'll die upon the sea!

May the fulfilment of his wish be long deferred! But, beneath the glamour, the fact remains that, for all her pearls, the sea demands everything that her sailors can give, often in every kind of danger, discomfort, and dismay; and the division between herself and the mainland is immense and profound. Let us rejoice then that the mainland life of these boys dedicated to her service should be so blithe.

A STUDY IN SYMMETRY

APROPOS of admirals, let me tell you the following story which, however improbable it may seem to you, is true.

Once upon a time there was an artist with historical leanings not unassociated with the desire for pelf—pelf being, even to idealists, what gasoline is to a car. The blend brought him one day to Portsmouth, where the *Victory* lies, with the honourable purpose of painting a picture of that famous ship with Nelson on board. The Admiral was of course dying, and the meritorious intention of the artist, whose wife wanted some new curtains, was to make the work as attractive as might be and thus extract a little profit from the wave of naval enthusiasm which was then passing over the country; for not only was the picture itself to be saleable, but reproductions were to be made of it.

Permission having been obtained from the authorities, the artist boarded the *Victory*, set up his easel on her deck, and settled down to his task, the monotony of which was pleasantly

alleviated by the chatter of the old salts who guard the ship and act as guides to the tourists visiting her. Since all these estimable men not only possessed views on art, but had come by now to the firm belief that they had personally fought with Nelson and witnessed his end, their criticisms were not too easily combated: so that the artist had not a tedious moment. Thus, painting, conversing, and learning (as one can learn only from a trained imparter of information), three or four days passed quickly away and the picture was done.

So far there has been nothing to strain credulity. But a time will come—is, in fact, upon us.

On the evening of the last day, as the artist was sitting at early dinner with a friend before catching the London train, his remarks turned (as an artist's sometimes will) upon the work upon which he had just been engaged. He expressed satisfaction with it in the main, but could not, he said, help feeling that its chances of becoming a real success would be sensibly increased if he could find as a model for the central figure some one whose resemblance to Nelson was noticeable.

"It seems to be a law of nature," he went on, "that there cannot exist at the same time—that is to say, among contemporaries—two faces exactly alike. That is an axiom. Strange as it

may sound, among all the millions of countenances with two eyes, a nose in the middle and a mouth below it, no two precisely resemble each other. There are differences, however slight." (He was now beginning really to enjoy the sound of his own voice.) "That is, as I say, among contemporaries: in the world at the moment in which I am speaking. But," he continued, "I see no reason why after the lapse of years Nature should not begin precisely to reproduce physiognomies and so save herself the trouble of for ever varying them. That being so, and surely the hypothesis is not too far-fetched"—Here his friend said, "No, not at all—oh no!"—"that being so, why," the artist continued, "should there not be at this moment, more than a century later, some one whose resemblance to Nelson is exact? He would not be necessarily a naval man—probably, indeed, not, for Nelson's face was not characteristic of the sea—but whoever he was, even if he were an archbishop, I," said the painter firmly, "should not hesitate to go up to him and ask him to sit to me."

The friend agreed that this was a very proper attitude and that it betokened true sincerity of purpose.

"Nelson's face," the painter continued, "was an uncommon one. So large and so mobile a

mouth is rare. But it is by no means impossible that a duplicate exists, and no matter who was the owner of it, even were he an archbishop, I should not hesitate to go up and ask him to sit to me."

(For the benefit of any feminine reader of this veracious history, I should say that the repetition which she has just noticed is not a slip on my part but has been carefully set down. It is an attempt to give verisimilitude to the conversation—because men have a habit of saying things like that twice.)

The friend again remarked that the painter's resolve did him infinite credit, and the two started for the station, still conversing on this theme.

On entering their carriage the first thing to take their attention was a quiet little man in black, who was the absolute double of the hero of Trafalgar.

"Good gracious!" whispered the painter excitedly, "do you see that? There's the very man. The likeness to Nelson is astonishing. I never saw anything like it. I don't care who he is, I must tackle him. It's the most extraordinary chance that ever occurred."

Assuming his most silky and deferential manner—for, though clearly not an archbishop, unless in mufti, this might yet be a person

of importance—the painter approached the stranger and tendered a card.

"I trust, sir, that you will excuse me," he began, "for the liberty I am taking, but I am an artist and I happen to be engaged on a picture of Nelson on the *Victory*. I have all the accessories and so forth, but what I very seriously need is a brief sitting from some gentleman with a likeness to the great Admiral. Such, sir, as yourself. It may be news to you—it probably is—but you, sir, if I may say so, are so like the famous and immortal warrior as almost to take one's breath away. It is astonishing, wonderful! Might I—would it be—could you—would you, sir, be so very kind as to allow me to paint you? I would, of course, make every effort not to inconvenience you—I would arrange so that your time should be mine."

"Of course I will, guvnor," said the man. "Being a professional model, I've been sitting for Nelson for years. Why, I've been doing it for a nartist this very afternoon."

DAVY JONES

A NAVAL gentleman of importance having asked me who the original Davy Jones was, I was rendered mute and ashamed. The shame ought properly to have been his, since he is in the Admiralty, where the secrets of the sea should be known, and is covered with buttons and gold braid; but there is caprice in these matters, and it is I (as a defaulting literary person) who felt it.

I left with bent head, determined, directly I reached London and books were again accessible, to find the answer. But have I found it? You shall decide.

I began with a "Glossary of Sea Terms," which is glib enough about the meaning of Davy Jones's locker but silent as to derivation. I passed on to "The Oxford Dictionary," there to find the meaning more precisely stated, after directions how to pronounce Davy's name. You or I would assume that he should be pronounced as he is spelt: just Davy; but the late Dr. Murray knew better. You don't say Davy; you say *Dē.vi.* Having invented and solved these diffi-

culties, the Dictionary proceeds: "Nautical slang. The spirit of the sea, the sailor's devil. Davy Jones's locker: the ocean, the deep, especially as the grave of those who perish at sea." Among the authors cited is Smollett in "Peregrine Pickle," and also one J. Willock, to whom I shall return later.

Still on the search for an origin of Davy Jones I went next to "The Dictionary of National Biography" (which, if only you could get it ashore, is, no matter what the pundits say as to the Bible and Boswell and Plato and "The Golden Treasury," and so forth, the best book for a desert island), and there I found no fewer than eight David Joneses, all of course Welsh, not one of whom, however, could possibly claim any connexion with our hero; three being hymn-writers and antiquaries, one a revivalist, one a soldier and translator, one a barrister, one a missionary to Madagascar (the only one who knew anything of the sea), and one a mad preacher whose troubles caused his "coal-black hair to turn milk-white in a night"—as mine seemed likely soon to do. However, I then bethought me of what I should have done first, and seeking the shelves where "Notes and Queries" reside was at once rewarded. For "Notes and Queries" had tackled the problem and done with it as long ago as 1851. On June

14 of that year Mr. Henry Campkin requested the little paper (which, since Captain Cuttle provided it with its excellent motto, should have a certain friendliness towards nautical questions) to help him. Mr. Campkin, however, did not, as my Admiralty friend did, say, "By the way, who the devil *was* Davy Jones?" He asked, as a gentleman should, in gentlemanly, if precise, terms: "Who was the important individual whose name has become so powerful a myth? And what occasioned the identification of the ocean itself with the locker of this mysterious person?"

Mr. Campkin, who obviously should have occupied a seat in the House of Commons, was answered in record time, much quicker than would be his fortune to-day; for on June 21 Mr. Pemberton, the only reader of "Notes and Queries" ever to take up the challenge, made his reply, and with that reply our knowledge begins and ends. Mr. Pemberton said that being himself a seafarer and having given much consideration to the question, he had come at length to the conclusion that the name of Davy Jones was derived from the prophet Jonah (who, of course, was not Welsh at all but an Israelite). Jonah, if not exactly a sailor, had had his marine adventures, and in his prayer thus refers to them: "The waters compassed

me about . . . the depth closed me round about, the weeds were wrapped about my head," and so forth. The sea, then, Mr. Pemberton continued, "might not be misappropriately termed by a rude mariner Jonah's locker"; while Jonah would naturally soon be familiarised into Jones, and since all Joneses hail from the country from whose valleys and mountains Mr. Lloyd George derives his moving perorations, and since most Welshmen (Mr. Lloyd George being no exception) are named Davy, how natural that "Davy Jones" should emerge! That was Mr. Pemberton's theory, and the only one which I have discovered; but I am sure that Mrs. Gamp would support him—although she might prefer to substitute for the word "locker" the word which comic military poets always rhyme to "réveillé."

But, indeed, the more one thinks of it, the more reasonable does the story seem; for, as Mr. Pemberton might have gone on to say, there is further evidence for linking up Jonah and Jones in the genus of fish which swallowed the prophet but failed to retain him. To a dialectician of any parts the fatal association of whales and Wales would be child's play. Later I found that Dr. Brewer of "The Dictionary of Phrase and Fable" supports the Jonah theory whole-heartedly; but he goes on—to my mind

very unnecessarily—to derive "Davy" from "duffy," a West Indian spirit. Thus, says he, Davy Jones's locker is really Duffy Jonah's locker—that is, the bottom of the sea, or the place where the sailors intended to consign Jonah. The confusion is rather comic. First, a man of God whom the crew throws overboard. Secondly a fish, divinely sent to save the man of God. Thirdly, the use of the man of God's name to signify the sailor's devil, with himself as sinister ruler of an element which he had the best reasons for hating. Thus do myths grow.

So much for Davy Jones. J. Willock, however, another of the authorities whom "The Oxford Dictionary" cites, plunges us into a further mystery. In one of his *Voyages* he says: "The great bugbear of the ocean is Davie Jones. At the crossing of the line they call out that Davie Jones and his wife are coming on board. . . ."

"And his wife"!

But with the identity of Mrs. Davy Jones I refuse to concern myself—not even though the whole Board of Admiralty command it.

THE MAN OF ROSS

I HAVE several reasons for remembering Ross, but the first is that a visit to that grey hillside town sent me to the authorities for more particulars concerning John Kyrle. Others are the intensity and density of the rain that can fall in Herefordshire; the sundial on Wilton Bridge; and the most elementary Roman Catholic chapel I ever saw—nothing but a bare room—made, however, when I pushed open the door on that chill and aqueous afternoon, cheerful and smiling by its full complement of votive candles all alight at once. In the honour of what Saint they burned so gaily, like a little mass meeting of flames, I cannot say, but probably the Gentle Spirit of Padua, who not only befriends all tender young things but, it is notorious, if properly approached, can find again whatever you have lost; and most people have lost something. I remember Ross also because I had Dickens's Letters (that generous feast) with me, and behold! on the wall of the hotel, whose name I forget but which overlooks the sinuous Wye, was his autograph and an intima-

tion that under that very roof the novelist had arranged with John Forster the details of his last American tour.

But these are digressions. The prime boast of Ross is that it had a Man; and this Man is immanent. You cannot raise your eyes in Ross without encountering a reminder of its Manhood, its Manliness; and the uninstructed, as they wander hither and thither, naturally become more and more curious as to his identity: how he obtained the definite article and the capital M so definitely—The Man—and what was his association with the place.

I cannot lay claim personally to total uninstruction. I remembered faintly Pope's lines which made the fame of the Man, but I retained only a general impression of them as praising a public benefactor who did astonishing things on a very small income and thus was to put to shame certain men of wealth in Pope's day who did for their fellow creatures nothing at all. But nowhere could I find the lines. The guidebooks refer to them lightly as though they were in every consciousness, and pass on. No shop had a copy of Pope; none of the picture postcards quoted them; they were not on the monument in the church; they were nowhere in the hotel. And this is odd, because it was probably not until the illustrious London poet had set the

seal of his approval on their late townsman and benefactor that the people of Ross realised not only how very remarkable had he been, but also that to be associated with such a personage might mean both distinction and profit. For the phrase "The Man of Ross" is now everywhere: he who once fathered orphans and the unfortunate now spreads his cloak over tea-shops, inns, and countless commercial ventures.

Here, however, is the passage, from the third *Moral Epistle*. P. the poet, it will be recalled, is moralising on riches, in metrical conversation with B.—Lord Bathurst):—

P. Rise, honest Muse! and sing the Man of Ross:
Pleased Vaga echoes through her winding bounds,
And rapid Severn hoarse applause resounds.
Who hung with woods yon mountain's sultry brow?
From the dry rock who bade the waters flow?
Not to the skies in useless columns tost,
Or in proud falls magnificently lost,
But clear and artless, pouring through the plain
Health to the sick and solace to the swain.
Whose causeway parts the vale with shady rows?
Whose seats the weary traveller repose?
Who taught that heaven-directed spire to rise?
"The Man of Ross," each lisping babe replies.
Behold the market-place with poor o'erspread!
The Man of Ross divides the weekly bread;
He feeds yon almshouse, neat, but void of state,
Where Age and Want sit smiling at the gate;

Him portioned maids, apprenticed orphans, blessed
The young who labour, and the old who rest.
Is any sick? The Man of Ross relieves,
Prescribes, attends, the med'cine makes and gives.
Is there a variance? enter but his door,
Balk'd are the courts, and contest is no more.
Despairing Quacks with curses fled the place,
And vile attorneys, now an useless race.

B. Thrice happy man! enabled to pursue
What all so wish, but want the power to do!
Oh say, what sums that generous hand supply?
What mines, to swell that boundless charity?

P. Of Debts and Taxes, Wife and Children clear,
This man possest—five hundred pounds a year.
Blush, Grandeur, blush! proud Courts, withdraw your blaze!
Ye, little Stars! hide your diminished rays.

B. And what? no monument, inscription, stone?
His race, his form, his name almost unknown?

P. Who builds a church to God, and not to fame,
Will never mark the marble with his name:
Go, search it there,[1] where to be born and die,
Of rich and poor makes all the history;
Enough, that Virtue filled the space between;
Prov'd, by the ends of being, to have been.

[1] In the Parish Register.

If the impression conveyed by those lines is that the Man of Ross was more of a saint than a Herefordshire squire, the fault is the poet's and in part his medium's. The Augustan couplet tended to a heightening, dehumanising effect. As a matter of fact, John Kyrle would seem to

have soared not at all: the plainest and most direct of men, he took to altruism and municipal improvements very much as his neighbours took to agriculture or cock-fighting. It was his amusement or hobby to make Ross a more livable-in place.

But before the poem is examined more closely, let me give the outline of John Kyrle's life. His father was Walter Kyrle of Ross, a barrister and J.P., and M.P. for Leominster in the Long Parliament. John was born on May 22nd, 1637, and educated at Ross Grammar School and Balliol College. He then passed on to the Middle Temple, but on succeeding to his father's property, worth about £600 a year, he settled down at Ross and commenced philanthropy, and never relaxed his efforts until his death many years later. He lived in the house opposite the very charming Market-hall, unmarried, and cared for by a relation named Miss Judith Bubb. He sat commonly in a huge and very solid chair, established on its stout legs like a rock, which I saw not long since in the window of Mr. Simmonds' old curiosity shop in Monmouth, where it serves as a show and a lure. According to a portrait of the Man of Ross which exists, made surreptitiously (for he would have none of your limners) as he sat at worship, he was tall, broad-

shouldered, of sanguine complexion, with a big nose. He wore a brown suit and a short bushy wig, and he had a loud voice. He visited a dame's school once a week, and on hearing of any delinquency would reprimand the infant in these words: "Od's bud, Od's bud, but I will mend you!" A burly man with a red face, big nose, and loud voice speaking thus might, to the young, be a too terrifying object, but we must guess that John Kyrle tempered the wind. "The Dictionary of National Biography" says that although tradition gives Kyrle credit for releasing poor debtors and starting them on new careers, and that although for so long, as Pope tells us, he stood between attorney and litigant, the law was ultimately too much for him, and he too became involved in a suit. He lived to be eighty-seven, dying of sheer old age on November 7th, 1724. His body lay in state in the church of Ross for nine days and was then buried without a head-stone.

For the prose of Kyrle's life and achievements, as distinguished from Pope's poetry, we have to go first to the diary of Thomas Hearn the antiquary. Under the date April 9th, 1732-33, Hearn writes: "He (John Kirle or Kyrle) was a very humble, good-natured man. He was a man of little or no literature. He always studied to do what good charitable offices he

could, and was always pleased when an object offered. He was reverenced and respected by all people. He used to drink and entertain with cider, and was a sober discreet man. He would tell people when they dined or supped with him that he could (if they pleased) let them have wine to drink, but that his own drink was cider, and that he found it most agreeable to him, and he did not care to be extravagant with his small fortune. His estate was five hundred pounds per annum, and no more, with which he did wonders. He built and endowed a hospital, and built the spire of Ross. When any litigious suits fell out, he would always stop them and prevent people's going to law. They would, when differences happened, say, go to 'the great man of Ross, or, which they did more often, go to 'the man of Ross,' and he will decide the matter. He left a nephew, a man good for little or nothing. He would have given all from him, but a good deal being entailed he could not. He smoked tobacco, and would generally smoke two pipes if in company, either at home or elsewhere."

A year later Hearn corrected certain of these statements. Thus: "1734. April 16. Mr. Pope had the main of his information about Mr. Kirle, commonly called *the Man of Ross* (whom he characterizeth in his poem of the

'Use of Riches') from Jacob Tonson the bookseller, who hath purchased an estate of about a thousand a year, and lives in Herefordshire, a man that is a great, snivelling, poor-spirited whigg, and good for nothing that I know of. Mr. Brome tells me in his letter from Ewithington on November 23rd, 1733, that he does not think the truth is strained in any particulars of the character, except it be in his being founder of the church and spire of Ross . . . but he was a great benefactor; and at the recasting of the bells gave a tenor, a large bell. Neither does Mr. Brome find he was founder of any hospital, and he thinks his knowledge in medicine extended no further than kitchen physick, of which he was very liberal, and might thereby preserve many lives.

"April 18. Yesterday Mr. Matthew Gibson, minister of Abbey Dore in Herefordshire, just called upon me. I asked him whether he knew Mr. Kirle, commonly called *the Man of Ross*. He said he did very well, and that his (Mr. Matthew Gibson's) wife is his near relation; I think he said he was her uncle. I told him the said *Man of Ross* was an extraordinary charitable, generous man, and did much good. He said he did do a great deal of good, but that was all out of vanity and ostentation, being the vainest man living, and that he always hated his

relations and would never look upon, or do anything for them, though many of them were very poor. I know not what credit to give to Mr. Gibson in that account, especially since this same Gibson hath more than once, in my presence, spoke inveterately against that good honest man Dr. Adam Ottley, late Bishop of St. David's. Besides, this Gibson is a crazed man, and withall stingy, though he be rich, and hath no child by his wife."

Another authority, more or less a contemporary, on the Man of Ross was Thomas Hutcheson, barrister, a descendant who became the owner of Kyrle's property. According to him Pope's questioning line:—

Who hung with woods yon mountain's sultry brow?

rather too sumptuously covers the planting of a "long shady walk, of nearly a mile and a half . . . called Kyrle's Walks, on the summit of the eminence commanding a beautiful prospect of the Wye." The poet's next query:—

From the dry rock who bade the waters flow?

is answered thus: "The Man of Ross promoted, and partly assisted by his own pecuniary aid, the erection of a small water work near the river Wye, which supplied the town of Ross with water, in which article it was very deficient

before." A further commentary was drawn from Mr. Hutcheson by the couplet:—

> Behold the market-place with poor o'erspread!
> The Man of Ross divides the weekly bread.

"He kept open house every market-day; any person without distinction might meet on that day at his hospitable board, which, according to the stories related to me by some old tenants, consisted of a joint of meat of each sort. The poor, who were always in waiting on that day, and every other, had distributed to them, by his own superintendence, the whole of the remains of each day, besides continual distributions of bread, etc."

As to Pope's question:—

> Whose causeway parts the vale with shady rows?

it seems that the poet was desperately out. The causeway connecting the town with the river dated from before the fourteenth century, but Kyrle probably saw to its proper maintenance.

Finally, let us see what the Sage of Fleet Street has to say to the statement:—

> The Man possest—five hundred pounds a year,

and its implication that everything was done on that sum. In the critical notice of Pope in "The Lives of the Poets," Dr. Johnson remarks: "Wonders are willingly told and will-

ingly heard. The truth is, that Kyrle was a man of known integrity and active benevolence, by whose solicitation the wealthy were persuaded to pay contributions to his charitable schemes; this influence he obtained by an example of liberality exerted to the utmost extent of his power, and was thus enabled to give more than he had. This account Mr. Victor received from the Minister of the place, and I have preserved it, that the praise of a good man being made more credible, may be more solid. Narrations of romantic and impracticable virtue will be read with wonder, but that which is unattainable is recommended in vain; that good may be endeavoured, it must be shown to be practicable."

So much for all the advocates—angeli and diaboli! But I think we need pay little attention to Mr. Gibson's testimony. Even though he were in part right, and a tinge of self-esteem or love of applause crept into the Man's benefactions, they remain benefactions no less, costing him as much money, and reaching the same goals. But away with such belittlings! Let us rather remember that the Rev. Matthew Gibson was crazed, stingy withal, and had no child by his wife. Personally I agree with my friend Mr. A. L. Humphreys, who has put it on record that, in his belief, it would be a good thing if every parish had a Man of Ross in prefer-

ence to a parson. No harm necessarily in a parson as well, but the Man is more important.

At least one more poetical tribute from genius did John Kyrle win. Among the *Juvenile Poems* of Samuel Taylor Coleridge is this:—

Lines written at the King's Arms, Ross, formerly the house of the "Man of Ross."

Richer than Miser o'er his countless hoards,
Nobler than Kings, or king-polluted Lords,
Here dwelt the Man of Ross! O, Traveller, hear!
Departed Merit claims a reverent tear.
Friend to the friendless, to the sick man health,
With generous joy he viewed his modest wealth;
He heard the widow's heaven-breathed prayer of praise,
He marked the sheltered orphan's tearful gaze,
Or where the sorrow-shrivelled captive lay,
Poured the bright blaze of Freedom's noon-tide ray.
Beneath this roof if thy cheered moments pass,
Fill to the good man's name one grateful glass:
To higher zest shall Memory wake thy soul,
And Virtue mingle in the ennobled bowl.
But if, like me, through life's distressful scene
Lonely and sad thy pilgrimage hath been;
And if thy breast with heart-sick anguish fraught,
Thou journeyest onward tempest-tossed in thought;
Here cheat thy cares! in generous visions melt,
And dream of goodness thou hast never felt!

The sad and lonely poet, tempest-tossed in thought, who wrote those lines, was then twenty-

one, on a walking tour with his friend Hucks, trying to construct Pantisocracy and forget Mary Evans.

For one "of little or no literature" the Man of Ross did not do so badly.

But there was even more honour to come. When, in 1876, the late Miranda Hill addressed a public letter to "Those who love Beautiful Things," and called upon her readers to help in getting more sweetness and light into the homes of the poor, and particularly the poor of London, the response took the form of a Society to which the name of John Kyrle was (at the suggestion of Mr. Benjamin Nattalie) given: the Kyrle Society. During its many years of activity, the Kyrle Society has done much to realise the idealism of its founders—for with Miranda Hill was associated her sister, the late Octavia Hill, that indomitable fighter for all that is good and ameliorative in life, whom, in her serene old age, a symphony in grey and silver, I used often to see walking on that height above Crockham Hill which her energies acquired for the nation as an open space for ever. In a speech which she made at one of the meetings of the Kyrle Society not long before her death, Octavia Hill thus summed up certain of the needs which that excellent organisation strove to supply. "Men, women, and

children," she said, "want more than food, shelter, and warmth. They want, if their lives are to be full and good, space near their homes for exercise, quiet, good air, and sight of grass, trees, and flowers; they want colour, which shall cheer them in the midst of smoke and fog; they want music, which shall contrast with the rattle of the motors and lift their hearts to praise and joy; they want suggestion of nobler and better things than those that surround them day by day. . . . I assure you that I believe these things have more influence on the spirit than we are at all accustomed to remember. They cultivate a sense of dignity and self-respect, as well as breaking the monotony of life."

These things has the Kyrle Society dispensed and will continue to dispense, among its countless and noble activities; and it is pleasant to think that that stolid old Man of Ross, in this new incarnation, has become so imaginatively sympathetic. How little can he ever have thought of this transmutation of his kindly busybodydom into something so fine and rare! But it was a true instinct which set his ancient name on the modern banner; and if ever a new motto is called for, the merits of "Od's bud, Od's bud, but I will mend you!" should be considered.

LAURA COMBINES BREAKFAST AND PHILANTHROPY

See "The Innocent's Progress"—Plate 3

THE INNOCENT'S PROGRESS

ONE thing leads to another, and had I not entered Mr. Simmonds' old curiosity shop in Monmouth to make inquiries about the Man of Ross's arm-chair, which nearly fills the window, I might never have met with "The Elegant Girl," and "The Elegant Girl" is one of the comeliest books I ever coveted.

Having asked all my questions about the chair, which has much of the stern solidity of a fortress, I went upstairs and immediately was rejoiced by the sight of one of the engravings (Plate 2) which are reproduced in this volume. It was one, said Mr. Simmonds, of a series, and he showed me eight others—nine in all—each with its moral verses underneath—and I was enchanted, so delicate is the colouring and so distinguished the design, so naïve the educational method and so easy the triumph. The reproductions here are absurdly small—the size of the originals is 9½ inches wide by 6 high—but though they give nothing of the tinting they retain something of the spirit, and the very striking composition is unimpaired by reduction.

Mr. Simmonds thought nine a complete set, but I felt that an even number was more probable, and, in time, was proved to be right; but it was long before I could obtain sight of the other three and discover that they belonged to a book and had been taken from their binding to decorate a nursery's walls. There are excitements in this form of hunt—*la chasse au bouquin*—commensurate with those that accelerate the pulses of wearers of pink coats, and some were mine as the scent grew hot and hotter. My first coverts were the print shops, but they were blank; then I drew the famous Bloomsbury spinneys, both the Reading Room and the Print Room, but they were blank too; and then, tally ho! away to the South Kensington gorse. It was here I had the luck to ascertain—through a reference to Tuer's "Pages and Pictures"—that "The Elegant Girl" was a book; and forthwith I turned to my friends the booksellers, and in High Street, Marylebone, got directly on the trail, which took me to Hampstead, where a copy of the work (the only one of which I have yet heard) was run to earth. It is this copy that now lies before me—the property of Mr. C. T. Owen, a famous collector of what the trade calls "juveniles," who has very kindly permitted the plates to be photographed for the present volume.

Mr. Simmonds thought the drawings the work of Adam Buck, an artist of child life, who has lately been the mode; but London experts differ. No doubt (they say) Buck's influence is apparent, but no more. The only name is that of Alais, the engraver, on the title-page, and I do not find that Alais ever worked for Buck, but there are at South Kensington child scenes by Singleton engraved by him. "The Elegant Girl" may be Singleton's. Equally may the designs be by a foreigner, for there is a distinctly foreign suggestion here and there, notably in the furniture. The plates are not aquatints but were coloured by hand: the extreme scarcity of the volume probably being due to this circumstance, only a small edition having been prepared and that, I should imagine, at a high figure. To-day, of course, the value of the book is vastly higher.

All, or very nearly all, the old-fashioned writers for children had but one purpose animating their breasts; and that purpose was to make children better. I don't say that to-day we try to make them worse; but their naughtiness can amuse us, as apparently it never could our ancestors, and wild flowers can be preferred to the products of the formal parterre. Even Miss Edgeworth came out nominally as "The Parents' Assistant," although her native kindliness

and sense of narrative were too much for her; and even she thought of the child too much as plastic material. Children as children excited little interest; but a child as a progressive moral animal, susceptible of moulding, a potential adult and citizen, was worth making books for, if in return it was responsive and mended its ways. There were of course a few books for the young which told an honest story—Charles and Mary Lamb's "Tales from Shakespeare" and "Mrs. Leicester's School" are early and shining examples—but the idea of amusement for amusement's sake was rare. And nonsense for the young, which later was to become a cult, did not exist before Edward Lear. Nothing can, of course, happen out of its time, and therefore the speculation is idle; but none the less it would be entertaining to visualise the effect of "Alice in Wonderland" on the little Fairchilds. What would Mr. Fairchild say to it? The work of a clergyman, too! Would not he return with renewed relish to the congenial task of repeating to his brood Biblical verses illustrating the wickedness of man's heart?

(Incidentally—but this is not the place, for "The Elegant Girl" is waiting—there are some interesting reflections to be recorded on the circumstance that the entertainment of the young has never been in such willing and safe hands

as those of the celibates. All the writers I have just glanced at (save Mrs. Sherwood) were unmarried. This need not be taken as any aspersion upon matrimony—there must be marriage and giving in marriage in order that little readers may exist—but it ought to be remembered whenever the single state is under criticism. Think of the injustice of the foreshadowed Bachelor Tax falling upon Lewis Carroll!)

"The Elegant Girl," the date of which is 1813, sets out to improve too, for this is the title: "The Elegant Girl, or Virtuous Principles the True Source of Elegant Manners"; but its lessons are so unprejudiced and persuasive that no one can object. Moreover, a very exceptional artistic talent was employed: the best available rather than the cheapest. With such attractive jam, who could resent the pill? Alone, the pictures do very little in the didactic way, but to the detached artist came an ally in the shape of a gentle—and probably, I think, female—bard. Each of the twelve drawings has a six-lined stanza to drive home the picture and inculcate a maxim of sound and refined behaviour.

In the first plate Laura (the elegant girl is, of course, named Laura) is seen in her little bedroom at her morning prayers, and, thus fortified, she then goes through the day in eleven episodes, all tending, as the Americans say, to

uplift. Washed and dressed, she joins, in Plate No. 2, her mother at early lessons in a charming library such as neither Vermeer nor Whistler would have disdained. According to the verses, Laura is careless of "what becomes her best," but to the casual male eye she seems to have chosen her trousers with no little discretion. Having sufficiently "explored the arts and sciences," she is, in Plate No. 3, ready for breakfast, again with her mother. Her father was—where? Possibly he was dead; possibly (the date is 1813) at the wars; probably still in bed. At any rate his daughter passes her day of edification entirely without his assistance.

Breakfast affords the opportunity of a lesson in practical philanthropy, for chance sends a beggar to the window, and Laura craves, and is granted, permission to give him food and drink. In Plate No. 4 she has a music lesson—a lesson that "is not thrown away," for

> By Science taught with taste to play,
> She'll charm erewhile the listening throng
> And sing with modest grace her song.

In Plate No. 5, having slipped a red smock over her dress, but still retaining the captivating trousers, Laura practises painting. In No. 6, substituting a purple smock for the red one, she teaches the little villagers their A.B.C.—a form of altruistic employment which those

can best approve
Who virtue and religion love.

In Plate No. 7, Laura, in yellow, acquires the rudiments of obedience and refrains from eating forbidden fruit. In Plate No. 8, in green, she carries food to an aged dame. In Plate No. 9, in blue, she brings a cup of broth to her mother, who, "languid and pale," reclines, like Madame Récamier, on an exceedingly uncomfortable couch. It is thus that Laura,

in early days,
Maternal tenderness repays.

The chief difficulty of any series of this kind is, artists tell me, to preserve the likenesses throughout. In the case of "The Elegant Girl" it has been fairly successfully overcome, but Laura, who at her orisons looks years older than when becomingly trousered, is never again so charming a child as in the library before breakfast; while, in the Plate which we have now reached, her mother's severe Greek profile, so noticeable at that frugal meal, has completely vanished. But, take it all round, the series is maintained with credibility and a sprightly realism.

In Plate No. 10 the mother is sufficiently recovered to play the harp while Laura bounds light on agile feet. In No. 11 Laura visits the

impoverished sick, and, by reading the "sacred page,"

> Dries up the widow's scalding tears,
> Exalts her hopes and calms her fears.

And finally, in crimson, she is presented by her mother with the guerdon of her day's good conduct, which consists of several boxes of odds and ends labelled "Gifts for the Poor," including a large number of top hats—

> Gifts for the Poor her own Reward,
> For Laura felt and understood
> The Luxury of doing Good.

Such is the pretty, unobtrusive didactic scheme of "The Elegant Girl." That it is now all out of date I am only too well aware; but it would do no great harm if a reprint of the book found its way into a few modern homes.

THOUGHTS AT THE FERRY

MY acquaintance among ferrymen is not extensive, but I cannot remember any that were cheerful. Perhaps there are none. The one over there at this moment, on the other side, for whom we are waiting and who is being so deliberate—he certainly has no air of gaiety.

There is a wealth of reasons for this lack of mirth. To begin with, a boat on a river is normally a vehicle of pleasure; but the ferryman's boat is a drudge. Then, the ordinary course of a boat on a river is up or down, between banks that can provide excitement, and around bends, each one of which may reveal adventure; but the ferryman's boat must constantly cross from side to side, always from the same spot to the same spot and back again, which is subversive of joy. All that the ferryman knows of the true purposes of a river he gains from observation of others, who gaily pass him, pulling with the stream or against it, and singing, perhaps, as they row. Did a ferryman ever sing? There was, when I was a boy, a pretty song about Twickenham Ferry,

but my recollections of it are that it was the passenger who sang: not, I fancy, in the boat, but before he entered it. If my memory is right, the fact is significant. In the company of such taciturnity and gloom who could carol?

The ferryman, again, must never leave his post. All the world may go wayfaring, but not he. To cross a river is in itself nothing; but to come, from somewhere unknown, to the bank of the river, cross it, and pass on to unknown bournes on the other side—that is an enterprise, and that is what every one but the ferryman is doing. I have written elsewhere—it is a recurring theme of sympathy—of the servants of the traveller who live by helping him on his eventful way but never participate in any wanderings—railway porters, for example—and the ferryman is perhaps chief, because so much of the very matter of romance—a running stream—comes into his daily routine. There he is, in the open air, with the breeze to fan and lure him, and the racing clouds to lift his thoughts, and the exciting sound of water in his ears: all the enticements to rove, but he must not be a rover. For the rest of us (as it must seem to him), exploration; for himself, the narrow confines of the known!

And it is a peculiarity of ferrymen that when you want them they are (like this reluctant

fellow) always on the other side. Not from any natural desire to annoy, but through a whim of the gods; yet to have to come over empty, how it must add fuel to their misanthropic fire! If every journey were with a fare the ferryman might be a shade more cheerful, even though the payment is so trifling. Was there ever a rich ferryman? Has a whimsical millionaire ever played at being a ferryman? Has a Carnegie ever left a ferryman a legacy?

And then the brevity of their companionships! Not that most ferrymen seem to desire human intercourse; but perhaps they did once, before the monotony of their task soured them. Down to the boat come the strangers from the great world—young or old, forbidding or beautiful, ardent or pensive—and howsoever the ferryman would like to hold them and talk with them, no sooner does the boat touch the farther bank than they are off again! Does not that make for a certain moroseness?

And what was the ferryman before he was a ferryman? For seldom, I should guess, is his an hereditary post. Some kind of failure normally precedes; and there again is cause for reticence.

Such friends as ferrymen possess are usually dumb animals. I have known more than one who carried his dog with him; and once, on the

Wye, I met one whose companion was a goose. No matter how often the crossing had to be made, the goose made it too. I used the ferry several times, and we were never without this escort; and the ferryman (who, I am bound to remark, humiliating though it be, propelled his boat from side to side, not with honest oars, but by means of a rope) emerged sufficiently from his apathy to praise the bird's fidelity. "Here," thought I, "is surely the material for a pertinent apologue. 'The Ferryman and the Goose': the very title is Æsopian. Or—to be more satirical—the title might be 'The Ferryman and the Swan,' the point being that he thought it was a swan, but in reality it was only a goose." But I had no further inspiration. And yet, by a practised homilist, a good deal could be done with it with which to score off poor human nature. "Ah! my friends"—surely it is fittest for the pulpit, after all—"ah! my friends may not each of us be as much in error as that poor deluded ferryman? Let us search our hearts and answer truthfully the questions: Do we know our friends as we ought? Does not their flattery perhaps blind us to their mediocrity? In short, are they swans or geese?"

Ferrymen——

But here is our man at last! On close inspection how dismal he looks!

LAURA'S MUSIC LESSON

See "The Innocent's Progress"—Plate 4

A LITTLE CHILD

THE decision that the governess-cart must be given up meant that a new owner for Polly must be found.

Polly is a roan pony; very round in the barrel, and particularly so of late, when there has been no food but meadow-grass. She had been with us (this is my neighbour's story, as told to me during the War: a very charming neighbour who keeps her temper at croquet)—Polly had been with us so long as to become, as ponies peculiarly can, a member of the family, so that to part with her savoured of treachery. Necessity, however, knows no law and sanctifies no memory, and the distasteful preparations were therefore begun. The first was the framing of the advertisement; which is not the simple matter that it might appear to be, because so much depends upon the choice of adjective: the selected word must both allure and (in our case) keep within the bounds of truth. What are the qualities most valued in a pony, we had to ask ourselves. Celerity? Polly was

fixed in her determination not to exceed the speed limit, at any rate on outward journeys. Willingness? Polly could be desperately stubborn. Strength? Yes, she was strong. Youth? Well, she came to us ten years ago and she was no foal then. After much serious deliberation, compared with which Versailles Conferences are mere exchanges of persiflage, it was decided to describe Polly either as "strong useful pony" or "useful strong pony." Further deliberations fixed the phrase as "Pony, strong, useful," and the advertisement was despatched to the local rag, as our very worthy county chronicle is too often called.

Next came the question of what price was to be asked. Here expert opinion was resorted to, in the shape of Mr. Edmead, the butcher. No one knows more about ponies than butchers do, and Mr. Edmead is exceptionally wise.

"Taking everything into consideration," he said, "I think that twenty-five pounds would be a fair price."

We clung to each other for support. Twenty-five pounds! And we had given only nine pounds all those years ago. Why had we not made pony-breeding a hobby? The War, Mr. Edmead went on to explain, had rendered ponies more valuable. Yes, taking everything into consideration, twenty-five pounds was a fair

price. We ought to get that. In fact, if he had been in need of a pony he would have given that himself; but just then he was well supplied, and Polly was, he feared, not quite fast enough for him. Good morning.

Men who want to buy a pony have a strong resemblance to each other. They are clean-shaven and wear hard round hats, and the collars of their overcoats are carelessly treated so that they are half up and half down. They carry sticks. Also, although they want a pony, they don't want one at quite such a figure. All the men who came to see Polly were furthermore alike in agreeing that she was no doubt a useful strong pony, even a strong useful pony, but she was not for them. Day after day Polly was examined. They opened her mouth and shook their heads, they felt her knees and her hocks, they looked at her with narrow eyes from near by and from far, they rattled their sticks in their hard hats, they gave her sudden cuts and prods. But they didn't buy.

We began to get desperate. Much as we esteemed Polly, now that she was to be sold we wanted to be rid of her. Things should be done quickly. And then came a market gardener, a large, rubicund, genial man named Fox. And Polly was again led forth and again subjected to every test known to pony-buyers. All

was going well, and would have gone well, but for Vivian.

Who, you ask, is Vivian? We should be better prepared for the irruption of new characters. True, but this is not my story, but my nice neighbour's.

Vivian is a small boy who had known Polly all his life, and who by some mischance wandered out from his lessons in the morning-room at the precise moment when Mr. Fox, who obviously was attracted by Polly, was making up his mind to pay the full money. Vivian, I should explain, is one of those ingratiating little boys who look upon the world as a sphere existing solely to provide them with friends, and who attach themselves with the strongest bands to open-air manual labourers. No sooner did Vivian see Mr. Fox's benevolent features than he added him to his collection.

"Run away, Vivian," I said. "It's not playtime yet, and we're busy."

"Are you going to buy Polly?" Vivian asked Mr. Fox by way of a suitable rejoinder to my command.

"I was thinking about it," said Mr. Fox, adding to me, "How old do you call her, ma'am? She looks to me about twelve."

The figure was so low that I nodded assent, but Vivian spoilt it by exclaiming, "Oh, mother,

and Mr. Brooks says she's seventeen if she's a day, and I'm sure she's a day."

Mr. Fox became thoughtful. "Mr. Brooks said that, did he?" he remarked.

I felt that I couldn't tell Vivian again to go in, because it would look as though I feared his frankness; which, to be candid, I did. All I could do was to hope for the best.

"She's quiet enough; used to traffic and all that?" Mr. Fox asked.

Then Vivian began to laugh. This trick of laughter over retrospection—chewing the cud of old jokes—we have always rather admired in him; his chuckles are very engaging; but now I trembled, and not without reason.

"Don't you remember, mother," he began, "that day when she was frightened by the traction engine and ran into the grocer's shop?"

Mr. Fox, in whose large hand my son's minute one was now reposing, looked grave.

"That's against her in my business," he said.

"Oh, but," I explained, "that was a very long time ago. She's quite steady now. Don't you remember, Vivian, it was on your fifth birthday?"

"No," said Vivian, "that was on my seventh birthday—something funny always happens on my birthdays," he explained to Mr. Fox—"it was on my fifth birthday that Polly fell down."

"She's been down, has she?" said Mr. Fox ominously.

The rest of it is too tragic. I had no intention of concealing anything; Mr. Edmead knew the pony's whole history when he valued her; but Vivian's presence made me nervous, painfully self-conscious; I felt my face burning and knew that I must suggest duplicity.

Mr. Fox, I will admit, played the game. He asked Vivian no questions; indeed he talked of other things than defective ponies; but I could see his mind working; I could see pound after pound dropping away from the grand total.

Well, that's the story. Mr. Fox led Polly away some ten minutes later, leaving in her stead a cheque. But it was not for twenty-five pounds—Vivian saw to that.

The moral? The moral is: when your husband is in Mesopotamia and the time comes to sell the pony, lock your cherubic son in the nursery.

A DEVONSHIRE INN

TO enter a strange town on foot and unencumbered—leaving one's bag at the station or sending it on in advance—is a prudent course, for it liberates the traveller to select his inn at his ease. A man carrying luggage is not free; the bag in a way pledges him, at any rate proclaims the fact that he is a traveller and will probably need a bed, and makes it the more difficult for him to extricate himself from the hostel that within doors has failed to come up to the promise of the exterior—as too often is the hostel's habit.

All unburdened, then, I entered Kingsbridge at lunch-time at the top of its steep main street, and as I walked down it I cast my glances this side and that to see which inn seemed most promising. The woman who, at Yealmpton, had given me some bread and cheese, had named the "Anchor" as the best. A man who had beaten me at billiards at Devonport had mentioned another; and, left to myself, I found myself more taken by the façade of a third.

I did, however, nothing rash; I looked care-

fully at all, and then I entered the one with the agreeable façade and asked for lunch.

Never have I done a wiser thing.

It is odd how trifling are the determining factors in some of the most momentous decisions that face us in life. Here was I alone, and tired, and in a strange part of the country, with the necessity before me of finding "a home from home" for three or four days, and yet, even without entering any of the other inns, I agreed to stay in this one. And why? Well, a little because the landlord (a big, strong, leisurely man with a white beard and a massive head), who himself did the waiting, was pleasant and attentive, and a little because his daughter, who had charge of the bar, was attentive and pleasant. But the real reason was pickled onions. Such was the excellence of these divine roots that I let everything else go. Nights might be bad, but lunches and dinners would be good: for were there not these onions, pickled according to a recipe of the host's mother, now with God, in her day famous for the best ways of preserving and curing and, indeed, of doing everything that a good housewife should? The enthusiasm displayed by this patriarchal Boniface for his mother was perfectly charming, its novelty being part of its charm. Very big landlords with white beards and footfalls that shake the

house do not, as a rule, talk about their mothers at all. Should they, through strange martial vicissitudes, come, as this one had done, to wait at table, they wait and go. But this one hovered, and talked reverently of his mother's household genius, giving me the while such delicious proofs of it that I could not have torn myself away.

To those exquisite esculents I shall be eternally grateful, for they brought me into knowledge of one of the most interesting of inns. It is a survival; indeed, to my great satisfaction, the word "posting" occurred in my bill, for a journey by wagonette to a distant village was thus ennobled. The stables are immense, and contained one horse. The coach-house is immense, and contained seventeen carriages of various kinds, from omnibus to dogcart, but chiefly broughams, all in a state of mouldiness. Coming by degrees to be recognised as a member of the little family which, by ceaseless activity, ran this unwieldy place—father, daughter, a superb cook, a maid-servant, and an ostler—I was free to wander as I would, and exploring the various floors and passages I came upon a billiard table whose cushions belonged to the Stone Age, and an assembly-room with a musicians' gallery. In the kitchen I watched at her mysteries the admirable lady who cooked and carried on the

noble traditions of the landlord's mother as set forth in a manuscript book in her own hand. In the bar parlour I watched the landlord, according to the new regulations, water down his spirits, and heard instalments of his long life, spent wholly, in this "house" and that, in ministering to the wants of his fellow-creatures—tired, or hungry, or thirsty, but chiefly thirsty. Then later in the evening the little cosy room would fill, and I would quietly take my place as one of the best listeners that its habitués had ever talked to. Listening is an old accomplishment of mine, and here, amid the friendliest of strangers, I gave it full play; and you would be surprised to know how much I know of Kingsbridge life. Probably their surprise would be even greater.

And still I have not really begun to describe this most alluring inn. In the cellar, for example, there was some '47 port. . . .

ON SHOPS AND STALLS

MOST people who do not keep shops have, I suppose, at one time or other thought that to keep a shop might be fun; of course, keeping it their own way, selling only what they liked, to whom they liked. No vulgar trade notions at all! The fact that there is no nursery game so popular as keeping shop probably proves this. And none is more popular, except, perhaps, among French country children, who prefer the game of market—each one presiding over a different stall, stocked with the most ingenious miniature counterfeits of vegetables and fruit fashioned chiefly from wild flowers and leaves, and all shouting against each other with terrific French volubility and not a little French wit.

We seldom go so far as actually to open an establishment, but we play with the idea. One of my friends has for years projected a London centre for all the most interesting and vivid European pottery, and if only she could assemble it and maintain the supply, I have little doubt of her success. But the chances are that

it will never materialize, the people who *do* things being so rare. Another is at this moment excitedly planning a restaurant in a neighbourhood where one seems peculiarly to be needed, as it is chiefly populated by dwellers in flats, the slogan of which is to be "Where to dine when cook goes out"; but that, too, will probably end in talk.

One would say, on the face of it, that a shop opened in a locality where that kind of shop did not previously exist would have a better chance than a shop opened next door to another shop of the same kind—apart from any unpleasantness that such contiguity might produce. But the methods of business are inscrutable, and there seem to be countless ways, often in direct opposition to each other, of conducting it successfully. One would, at the first blush, have called this principle of scientific selection and segregation the soundest; and yet that of congregation seems to be just as sensible; so that while one man succeeds because he is the only tailor in the street, another man can be even more successful because he is in a street where every other establishment is a tailor's too. There are also the antagonistic principles of ostentation and self-effacement, each again apparently satisfactory: so that one hatter, for example, succeeds because he inhabits a palace of light, and

another because you can hardly see through the grimy panes of his old-fashioned and obsolete windows. There are, furthermore, the antipodal theories of singularity and plurality: so that one draper makes as good a thing as he wants out of a single shop, and another rises to wealth by dint of opening twenty shops at once.

And then there are the business people who thrive by apparently doing no business. We all know of shops which no one was ever seen to enter; while at the opposite pole are the mandarins of trade who disdain to disclose their identity to strangers—such as Altman and Tiffany, serenely secure in their anonymous stores.

But to select one's line . . .?

There was once a man who, without any special training, decided that he would start business in London; and he came to town to prospect and make up his mind, which was curiously blank and receptive. In his walking about he was struck by the number of old curiosity shops in the neighbourhood of the British Museum and South Kensington Museum, which led to the inference, hitherto unsuspected by him, but known to the dealers, that there is something exciting in the air of those places, so that the visitor, having seen many odd things, wishes

to acquire some for himself. All his plans to establish himself in London failed, however, because he could not obtain a site for a monumental mason's yard opposite Westminster Abbey.

My own ambition, if ever I took to keeping a shop, would be merely to be in a congenial line of business. Some things are interesting to sell, and some most emphatically are not. Old books would appear to be an ideal commodity; but this is far from the case, because I should want not to sell them but to keep them. Pictures, too—how could one part with a good one? And, equally, how permit a customer to be so misguided as to pay money for a bad one? A fruit-shop would be a not unpleasant place to move about in, were it not that it is one of my profoundest beliefs that fruit ought not to be sold at all, but given away. The tobacconist's was once an urbane and agreeable career; but it is so no longer. To-day the tobacconist is a mere cog in a vast piece of machinery called a Trust; and the tobacco-shop is as remote from the old divan, where connoisseurs of the leaf met and tested and talked, as the modern chemist's, with its photograph frames and "seasonable gifts," is remote from the home of Rosamund's purple jar.

That ingenious and adventurous tobacconist,

Mr. Godall, revisiting the London which he found, or made, so like Baghdad, would have to discover a new kind of headquarters. Perhaps he would open an oyster-bar (it was in an oyster-bar near Leicester Square that the young man proffered the cream tarts); more likely an American bar. But if he really wanted to observe human nature at its most vulnerable and impulsive—that is, at night—he would take a coffee-stall. After ten o'clock, the coffee-stall men are the truest friends that poor humanity has. There is a coffee-stall within a few yards of my abode; and no matter at what hour I return, the keeper of it is always brisk and jovial, with the hottest beverages that ever were set to timid lips. His stall is surrounded by hungry and thirsty revellers, chiefly soldiers, not infrequently accompanied by the fair. Every one calls him by his Christian name, and every one talks and is jolly. And no matter at what hour in the night I wake, or from what disconcerting dream, I am always at once secure in my mind that the old recognisable world is still about me and I have not passed over in my sleep, because the voices and laughter about the coffee-stall fill the air. "Good," I say, "I am still here." Now it would be a pleasant thing, and prove one's life not to have been lived in

vain, to be able to minister in the small hours gaily to so many heroes, and incidentally to impart to wakeful and disquieted neighbours reassurance of stability.

THIRD THOUGHTS

IT is my destiny (said my friend) to buy in the dearest markets and to sell—if I succeed in selling at all—in the cheapest. Usually, indeed, having tired of a picture or decorative article, I have positively to give it away; almost to make its acceptance by another a personal favour to me. But the other day was marked by an exception to this rule so striking that I have been wondering if perhaps the luck has not changed and I am, after all, destined to be that most enviable thing, a successful dealer.

It happened thus. In drifting about the old curiosity shops of a cathedral city I came upon a portfolio of water-colour drawings, among which was one that to my eye would have been a possible Turner, even if an earlier owner had not shared that opinion or hope and set the magic name with all its initials (so often placed in the wrong order) beneath it.

"How much is this?" I asked scornfully.

"Well," said the dealer, "if it were a genuine Turner it would be worth anything. But let's say ten shillings. You can have it for that; but

I don't mind if you don't, because I'm going to London next week and should take it with me to get an opinion."

I pondered.

"Mind you, I don't guarantee it," he added.

I gave him the ten shillings.

By what incredible means I found a purchaser for the drawing at fifty pounds there is no need to tell, for the point of this narrative resides not in bargaining with collectors, but in bargaining with my own soul. The astonishing fact remains that I achieved a profit of forty-nine pounds ten and was duly elated. I then began to think.

The dealer (so my thoughts ran) in that little street by the cathedral west door, he ought to participate in this. He behaved very well to me and I ought to behave well to him. It would be only fair to give him half.

Thereupon I sat down and wrote a little note saying that the potential Turner drawing, which no doubt he recollected, had turned out to be authentic, and I had great pleasure in enclosing him half of the proceeds, as I considered that to be the only just and decent course.

Having no stamps and the hour being late I did not post this, and went to bed.

At about 3.30 a. m. I woke widely up and, according to custom, began to review my life's

errors, which are in no danger of ever suffering from loneliness. From these I reached, by way of mitigation, my recent successful piece of chaffering, and put the letter to the dealer under both examination and cross-examination. Why (so my thoughts ran) give him half? Why be quixotic? This is no world for quixotry. It was my eye that detected the probability of the drawing, not his. He had indeed failed; did not know his own business. Why put a premium on ineptitude? No, a present of, say, ten pounds at the most would more than adequately meet the case.

Sleep still refusing to oblige me, I took a book of short stories and read one. Then I closed my eyes again, and again began to think about the dealer. Why (so my thoughts ran) send him ten pounds? It will only give him a wrong idea of his customers, none other of whom would be so fair, so sporting, as I. He will expect similar letters every day and be disappointed, and then he will become embittered and go down the vale of tears a miserable creature. He looked a nice old man too; a pity, nay a crime, to injure such a nature. No, ten pounds is absurd. Five would be plenty. Ten would put him above himself.

While I was dressing the next morning I thought about the dealer again. Why should I

(so my thoughts ran), directly I had for the first time in my life brought off a financial *coup,* spoil it by giving a large part of the profit away? Was not that flying in the face of the Goddess of Business, whoever she may be? Was it not asking her to disregard me—only a day or so after we had at last got on terms? There is no fury like a woman scorned; it would probably be the end of me. The Rockefellers and the Vanderbilts have won to success and affluence probably just because they don't do these foolish impulsive things. If I am to make any kind of figure in this new *rôle* of fine-art speculator (so my thoughts continued) I must control my feelings. No, five pounds is absurd. A *douceur* of one pound will meet the case. It will be nothing to me—or, at any rate, nothing serious—but a gift of quail and manna from a clear sky to the dealer, without, however, doing him any harm. A pound will be ample, accompanied by a brief note.

The note was to the effect that I had sold the drawing at a profit which enabled me to make him a present, because it was an old, and perhaps odd, belief of mine that one should do this kind of thing; good luck should be shared.

I had the envelope in my pocket containing the note and the cheque when I reached the club for lunch; and that afternoon I played bridge

so disastrously that I was glad I had not posted it.

After all (so my thoughts ran, as I destroyed the envelope and contents) such bargains are all part of the game. Buying and selling are a perfectly straightforward matter between dealer and customer. The dealer asks as much as he thinks he can extort, and the customer, having paid it, is under no obligation whatever to the dealer. The incident is closed.

THE ITALIAN QUESTION

THERE are, no doubt, matters of importance which must always agitate the minds of Italian senators and the souls of Italian reformers; the country of Dante, Garibaldi, and D'Annunzio cannot for long be without deep and vital problems, political and social: but for me, in that otherwise delectable land, the dominant question is, What becomes of the mosquito while you are hunting for him? (I say "him," although, of course, there are supporters of the theory that mosquitoes are feminine. But I know he is a he, and I know his name, too: it is, for too obvious reasons, Macbeth.)

This is my procedure. I undress, then I put on a dressing-gown and slippers, and, lifting the mosquito curtains, I place the candle inside them on the bed. Then, with the closest scrutiny, I satisfy myself that there is no mosquito inside, as indeed Eleanora, the handmaid, had done some hours earlier, when she made the bed. *"Niente, niente,"* she had assured me, as she always does. None the less, again I go carefully round it, examining the net for any faulty hang-

ing which might let in an insect ascending with malice from the floor.

This being done, I creep through, blow out the candle, and go to sleep.

I have slept perhaps an hour when a shrill bugle call, which I conceive in my dreams to be the Last Trump, awakens me, and as I wake I realise once again the melancholy fact that it is no Last Trump at all, but that there is, as there always is, a mosquito inside the curtain.

Already he has probably bitten me in several places; at any cost he must be prevented from biting me again. I sit up and feel my face all over to discover if my beauty has been assailed; for that is the thing I most dread. (Without beauty what are we?) I lie quite still while I do this, straining to catch his horrid song again; and suddenly there it is, so near that I duck my head swiftly, nearly ricking my neck in doing so.

This confirming my worst fears, there is nothing for it now but to lift the curtains, slip out on to the cold stone floor, light the candle, and once again go through the futile but necessary movement of locating and expelling a mosquito.

That there will be none to expel, I know.

None the less I crawl about and peer into every corner. I shake the clothes, I do everything that can be done short of stripping the curtains, which I am too sleepy to do. And then

I blow out the candle for the second time and endeavour to fall asleep again.

But this time it is more difficult: Macbeth has performed his pet trick too thoroughly. At last, however, I drowse away, again to be galvanised suddenly into intense and dreadful vigilance by the bugle shrilling an inch from my ear.

And so once again I get up and once again the pest vanishes into nothing. . . .

The next time I don't care a soldo if he is there or not, I am so tired; and the rest of the night is passed in a half-sleep, in which real mosquitoes and imaginary mosquitoes equally do their worst, and I turn no hair. And then, some years later, the blessed dawn breaks and spreads and another Italian night of misery passes into glorious day; and, gradually recognising this bliss, I sit up in bed and begin to tear away at the fresh poison in my poor hands and wrists, which were like enough to a map of a volcanic island in the Pacific yesterday, but now are poignantly more so.

And suddenly, as I thus scratch, I am conscious of a motionless black speck on the curtain above me. . . .

It is—yes—no—yes—it is Macbeth.

I agitate the gauze, but he takes no notice; I approach my hand, a movement which in his saner moments he would fly from with the

agility of electricity; he remains still. He is either dead or dazed.

I examine him minutely and observe him to be alive, and the repugnant truth is forced upon me that he is not merely drunk but drunk with my blood. That purple tide must be intoxicating; and his intemperance has been his ruin.

There is only one thing to be done. I have no paltry feelings of revenge; but his death is indicated. The future must be considered. And so I kill him. It is done with the greatest ease. He makes no resistance at all: merely, dying, saluting me with my own blood. It is odd to have it thus returned.

A good colour, I think, and get up, conscious of no triumph.

Then, going to the glass, I discern a red lump on my best feature. . . .

ON DISGUISE

IT was pointed out that one of the most striking novelties of the Peace Day revels in London was the number of girls dressed as men, chiefly as soldiers and sailors. Men who were dressed as women—at least recognisably so—I did not observe, but then in a crowd at night they might be more difficult to detect, whereas no woman can be a really plausible man. The idea dominating these girls was less to deceive than to be hilarious, and most of them, I am sure, before the evening was over, achieved genuine male company.

For a man to pretend to be a woman is a less savoury proposition; but it can be done without offence (as in "Charley's Aunt"), and I heard the other day a pleasant story of such a disguise, the hero of which is a comedian of great acceptance by the youthful every Christmas. This popular performer laid a wager with the *maître d'hôtel* of a famous London restaurant that some time or other within the coming year he would enter the restaurant dressed as an old woman, and be served with lunch as though he

were an ordinary customer. The *maître d'hôtel,* who had been maintaining that men dressed as women were, at any rate in broad daylight, always to be detected, accepted, and a sum was fixed sufficient to make the enterprise worth while, the conditions being that if the disguise were penetrated the *maître d'hôtel* should indicate the discovery by a somewhat idiomatic form of words, more suitable to be applied to a sham lady than a real one; and if the actor succeeded he should send for the manager and thank him for his lunch. Each winner would add a request for the amount of the bet.

A few weeks ago the comedian won. But the cream of the story is that during the year no fewer than three unoffending and genuine old ladies, as female as God created them, were, on different occasions, more than astonished to be accosted by the *maître d'hôtel* in the midst of their meals with a triumphant and not too refined catch-phrase, and to be asked for a tenner.

People look now so little at the clothes of others that disguise must have become easier than it was. The War brought so many strange costumes into being that we stare hardly at all, and at uniforms never. A man wearing a kilt, leggings, and spurs might, before the War, have attracted attention; we now merely mutter, "Another of those Mounted Highlanders," and pass

on. In fact, we look more at members of the no-hat brigade than at anyone else, and at them only to see if they are authentic bareheads or chance to have their hats in their hands.

Although the principal reasons for disguise are to assist in evading justice (the criminal) and to assist in pursuing crime (the detective), there are, I hope, a few whimsical humourists left who take to it for its own sake or to make things more possible. A dull July day with a north wind, such as in 1919 was the price of a divine May and June, might be made quite tolerable if we masqueraded through it and pulled the legs of our friends, like Sir Walter Scott's friend, the lady of the "Mystifications." I am sure that it would enable us to have better holidays. But we should have to be thorough: it is no use dressing up as a policeman and walking fast, or assuming the mien of a Jewish financier and taking long steps, or borrowing a scarecrow's wardrobe to beg in and forgetting to supplant our natural assurance with a cringe. In fact, all the real work is to come after the clothes are on. You may sit in Clarkson's for a couple of hours having a beard attached to your face (as I once watched a friend of mine doing), but, when it is finished, you must look and behave not merely

like a man with a beard, as he did, but like a bearded man. He came away so painfully aware of a transfigured chin that he collected every eye and the police began to follow him merely on suspicion.

Indeed, to carry a disguise well requires unremitting concentration. The walk comes first: one would have continually to remember it. Then the carriage of the hands. Dressed as a curate, for example, you would give it all away by strolling along with your hands in your pockets; just as if you affected to be a seller of motor-cars you would fail if you had them anywhere else. This need of unrelaxing thought is the reason why disguise would be such a useful ally of the holiday maker. The completest escape from one's ordinary preoccupations could be obtained by a resolute simulation of this kind. It is not enough to go to Brighton; that is only half a holiday. But to go to Brighton as a bishop, say, or a taxi-driver, an American soldier or an Indian law student, and keep it up—that would be a total change, a vacation indeed.

BROKEN ENGLISH

TWO examples of broken English have recently fallen upon my grateful ear—both from the lips of foreign door-keepers of restaurants.

The first touched upon an untimely, although welcome, heat-wave.

"It is," I remarked with an affability equalled only by want of originality, "almost too warm."

"Yes," the porter replied; "ze 'ot, 'e come all in one."

On the second occasion I was waiting for a guest who was late. After a while I commented, pleasantly, to the door-keeper on the tendency of the fair sex to be behind time.

He laughed the light, easy laugh of one who has deep intimacy with the world we live in. "Ladies always late," he said; "always make themselves wish and desire for."

However faulty in construction, both those phrases are epigrammatic. I should not go so far as to say they could not be improved upon, yet it would be difficult to make them more vivid.

To endow the heat with gender is assuredly to add to its reality: a blast from Vulcan's furnace, for example; while the remark about the tarrying ladies enshrines a great verity such as restaurant door-keepers are perhaps better fitted to understand than most of us. At any rate, if a restaurant door-keeper does not learn such things, who can? Both phrases also show that neither speaker, after I know not how many years in England, is yet making any effort to talk English, but is content to clothe his own native thoughts in the most adequate English apparel that he can collect; just as I, for one, never have done in France other than translate more or less faithfully my English sentences into French. As for talking French—never! No such good fortune. But I am quite sure that, however amusing my blunders have been, no one has ever thought them epigrammatic, because the English syntax does not automatically tend to witty compression as the French does.

That illiteracy can get there as quickly and surely as the highest culture, though by a different route, is proved by the following instance.

Once upon a time there was a Little Tailor in a little shop in Soho. Not a tailor in the ordinary sense of the word, but a ladies' tailor. He was never seen out of shirt sleeves which

might have been whiter, and he came from one of the foreign lands where the youths seem to be under conscription for this trade. What land it was I cannot say for certain, but I should guess Poland.

Once upon a time—in fact, at the same time—there was also a lady connected with the stage, and as her theatre was contiguous to the Little Tailor's place of business, it was only natural that when one of her gowns was suddenly torn her dresser should hasten to him to have it put right. But the charge was so disproportionate to the slight work done that the dresser deferred payment, and deferred it so long that the Little Tailor had to lay down the shears and take the pen in their place. And this is what he wrote:—

Dear Miss,—I don't feel like exactly to quarrel with somebody. But it is the first time in my life happens to me a thing like that. And therefore I am not going to let it go. I was just keeping quiet to see what you would do. But what I can see you think I have forgotten about it. But I may tell you this much. It is not the few shillings but it is the impudence to come in while I am away to ask the girl to do it as a special, and then to come in and take it away, and then tell the girl you would come in to-morrow to see me. And this is six weeks already and you have not come yet. The only thing I can say now, Miss, if you will kindly send the money by return, because I tell you candidly. I will not be had by you in this manner. Should you not

send the money I shall try to get to know you personally, and will have something to say about it.

—If the art of letter-writing is to state clearly one's own position, that is as good a letter as any written. Every word expresses not only the intention of the writer but his state of mind. No one could improve upon it except in essentials.

And here is a letter by a Pole partially Americanised. It was recently addressed to a Chicago firm:

Dear Gentlemen,—Seaing Your Advertisement in the Daily News that you wanted a Agent in Chicago I am a Temperance Polish bachelor. I am 35 years of age, I live 30 years in Chicago have a clear record. I love all Nations, I am inteligent i worked in Metal line 10 years. I am a fine talker I lived in 4 parts of Chicago. I have a mild disposition I have 100. cash. I am a Orphan. I work for a Jewish Real Estate man on Commission he is worth 50,000 dollars he made that in 7 years. i want a small salary and Commission to act as General Agent. I have a 4 room flat and furnished for my own money and i have a roomer he has 5000 cash. I am a fine Business talker used to being in Cigar and Grocery and Candy Business some years agow. I will purchase a 25000 dollar share in your Business Dear Gentlemen if you find me a wife that has 50000 dollars cash or more. with best success to you dear gentlemen, I will take a Widow, a white woman i love children.

Very truly, etc.

With Baboo broken English we have long been familiar. Whole books have been devoted to its exploitation; but the supply is continuous and something new is ever emerging from India. Here is a recent effort by a Calcutta student in search of pleasure. Writing to a firm of job-masters in that city, he says:—

Dear Sir,—It is to approach you for a kind consideration. I am a student. I want a carriage either a tandaum or a phaeton for evening drive now and then but not everyday. It is to know from you whether you allow your carriages to be engaged for part of a day say from 5 to 9 or 10 in the evening and if the answer be in the affirmative at what rate you do so. If you have no such rule will you be kind enough to consider the case of a young man who wants a carriage for joy-driving. It rests solely with you and be good and kind enough to grant him what he wants. As regards charges in the first instance let me tell you and which you perhaps know thoroughly well that the student is generally poor but merry, the best for him is to have it free of any charge and if such cannot be the case, be kind enough to let me know what least you can charge him for the same. I shall inform you by phone or by a letter the date and time when I shall require the carriage, you will send it with your syce and at the end of every month I shall pay off the bill. I know driving but not very nicely; and if you kindly grant me my humble prayer you may send me a nice and well trained horse and I shall do well with it. In a month's time I may require it 6 or 7 times in the evening. Now, Sir, I do not know how far I have

been able to express fully what I wish to but I hope you have fully understood what I mean and I pray you, Sir, to give it a kind consideration and let me know of it at your earliest convenience. This may seem to you like a fancy but I am sure you have understood what I mean and desire, and again I request you to grant me my humble prayer for which act of kindness I shall remain ever obliging to you. Please try to give it free of any charge; this will not affect your huge business the least on the other hand will provide a student with a merriest job for which act he will pray to the Almighty for the prosperity and good-name of the firm. You have understood what I mean so kindly excuse me for the language used. Please keep this secret and confidential.

A favourable reply is expected at the earliest possible convenience by—Sincerely yours,

The African supplicant has now entered the lists too, and there are few mails from the West Coast that do not bring to a certain London publishing firm appeals for catalogues and books. The difference between the Baboo and the African is very striking. The Baboo approaches the patron almost on his stomach, certainly with a cringe, whereas the African smiles light-heartedly, baring all his white teeth with cheerful confidence. Here is a typical letter from a student in Ashanti to the firm in question:

Dear Sir,—I am with much pleasure to indite you about your name that has come to my hand with

great joy. On the rêceipt of this letter, know that I want to be one of your fellow friends. You have been reported to me by a friend of mine of your good attention and benevolences. My openion of writing you is to say, I want to take you as my favourite friend. Everything or news that may be happened there at your side, I wish you to report same to me. And I also shall report same to you satisfaction. Will you be good enough to agree with me? Then I hope to get few lines of news from you being as you consented or disconsented. To have a friend at abroad is something that delights the life. I am earnestly requested to hear from you soon. I beg to detain, dear Sir, Yours truly, ———

Thus does another ambitious youth, also in Ashanti, in whose veins the virus of English civilisation has begun to work, put his needs and his hopes and his potentialities before a well-known London firm of travel agents with outposts all over the world:—

Dear Sirs,—I have the honour most respectfully to bring this before you to ask your favour to remit me down per the very first outward mail steamer to send me passenger's ticket so that I may run up quickly to your station and stay with you, because I often hear and know that you are the best trainer in the city of London. So I wish you will send me ticket. I am orphan. The object which induces me to write you this letter is this, I wish to be an competent educated fellow, but in our Africa here there exists no better school and tutor. I hope you will do my request, and may this my humble letter meet you in good condition. I am orphan. Awaiting your

favourable reply per the next steamer coming, I beg to be, Sirs, Your obedient Servant, ——

From China comes a specimen of English as fractured with the best of motives by a Chinese student. The Kaiser having been given as the subject of an essay competition by the English class in whatever celestial college it happened to be, some admirable documents resulted, from one of which I take a few salient sentences:—

The German Kaiser is not the Superior Man as deciphered by the Chinese literature; he is surely a mean fellow containing much fraudish cunnings in his deceited heart. The Superior Man is shown in the merits of excellent heart with much loving kindness to all peoples; the mean fellow is displayed in the black heart of the ungenerated devils of the hell with much loving kindness only to himself. . . . The German Kaiser he awfully wishing to slave the people and extinct the civilisations of the universe; he destroy the literature books, and the arts, and the ships, and mess the people of Allies Nations together with the intermediate outstanding Nations. . . . Thus it will be clearly seen by whole universal globe that the German Hun Kaiser he conceal much brutish iniquity in his heart, and is not fit to sit in the pail of the Allies Nations including the Chinese Republic.

There, again, the meaning of the writer could not be made more clear by perfect prose.

And here is a Japanese jewel, which the

London office of a Tokio engineering house received not long since:

Regarding the matter of escaping penalty for non-delivery of the machine, there is a way to creep round same by diplomat. We must make a statement of big strike occur in our factory (of course, big untrue). Please address my firm in enclosed form of letter and believe this will avoid penalty of case.

As Mr. B. is a most religeous and competent man and also heavily upright and godly it fears me that useless apply for his signature. Please attach name by Yokahama office making forge, but no cause to fear prison happening as this is often operated by other merchants of highest integrity.

It is highest unfortunate Mr. B. so god-like and excessive awkward for business purpose. I think much better add little serpentlike wisdom to upright manhood and so found a good business edifice.

From broken English to broken-hearted English is but a step, and I have before me as pretty an example of that piteous tongue as—short of a great and tragic poignancy—could be wished. It is a letter written by a little American boy named Arthur Severn Mead to his parents from his first school.

My Most Dearest Father and Mother,—I am very sick and I want to come home.

O dearest father and mother I know that you wont refuse me. I have a very bad headache. I dont eat

anything nor I dont sleep any. I lay awake every night thinking of home and you dearest father and mother.

O dearest father and mother wilt thou father let me come home.

I cannot live here. I am crying all the time.

I will take it out of my money and will work for you all the time.

My most dearest mother I was opening my trunk today and I found those candys you put in and O dearest mother how I thank you.

O dearest Father and Mother I pray for you every night and morning and I pray to Him that you will let me come home and I know that thou wilt say "yes."

I cannot go to school because I am so sick. O dearest father and mother I will love you so much and I will never worry you any more and I will be a better boy if you will only say yes.

Dearest father and mother I cannot live here. O do let me come home.

Write now dearest father and mother and say yes.

I send my love to all.

Good bye.—From your loving son,

ARTHUR.

Say yes dearest Father and Mother.

ENTHUSIASTS

IN turning over the pages of "Wisden's Cricketers' Almanack," best of year-books, for 1919, I came upon the obituary notice of a monarch new to me, who died in April of the preceding year at the age of six-and-forty: George Tubow the Second, who reigned over Tonga and was the last of the independent kings of the Pacific. As to the qualities of head and heart displayed by the deceased ruler, *Wisden* is silent; to inquire into such matters is not that annalist's province. George Tubow the Second won his place in *Wisden's* pages because he was a cricket fan and the head of a nation of cricket fans. "His subjects became so devoted to the game that it was necessary to prohibit it on six days of the week in order to avert famine, the plantation being entirely neglected for the cricket-field."

To what lengths of passion for his game a baseball fan can go, I am not sufficiently Americanised to be able even to guess; but there is certainly something about a ball, whatever its size and consistency, that leads to extremes of

devotion. For the wildest enthusiasts we must always go to games. But among collectors enthusiasts are numerous, too. The courts not long since were occupied with the case of a gentleman of leisure who had fallen into the moneylenders' hands very heavily through a passion for adding dead butterfly to dead butterfly; while every one knows the story of one of the Rothschilds fitting out an Arctic expedition in the hope that it would bring back, alive, even a single specimen of a certain boreal flea. All other fleas he possessed, but this was lacking. On making inquiries among friends I find that the classic example of enthusiasm is, however, not a cricketer nor a collector, but the actor who, when cast for Othello, blacked himself all over. Every one, of course, has heard the story, but its origin may not be generally known, and I am wondering if it occurred anywhere in print before Mr. Crummles confided it to Nicholas Nickleby. Was it a commonplace of the green-room or did Dickens (who was capable of doing so) invent it? Joseph Knight being no more, to lighten the small hours with gossip and erudition, who shall tell?

Meanwhile I am reminded of an incident in modern stage history which supplies a pendant to the great Othello feat. It occurred in the days when the gramophone was in its infancy

and the late Herbert Campbell was approaching his end. That massive comedian, who was then engaged in his annual task of personating a dame or a queen, or whatever was monumentally feminine, in the Drury Lane pantomime—as a matter of fact, he was at the moment a dame—had been invited by one of the gramophone companies to visit their office in the City and make a record of one or more of his songs and one or more of his dialogues with the other funny man, whoever that might be. The name escapes me; all that I feel certain of is that it was long after the golden age when Herbert Campbell served as a foil to the irresponsible vivacity of Dan Leno—who in association with him was like quicksilver running over the surface and about the crevices of a rock—and still longer after those regular Christmas partnerships with Harry Nicholls which were liberal educations in worldly sagacity tempered by nonsense. The name of the other actor is, however, unimportant, for Herbert Campbell is the hero of this tale, and it was for Herbert Campbell's songs and patter that the operator was waiting and the waxen discs had been prepared and the orchestra was in attendance and the manager had taken his cheque book from his desk—for "money down" is the honourable rule of the gramophone industry. The occasion was fur-

thermore exceptional because it was the first time that this popular performer had been "recorded." Hitherto he had refused all Edisonian blandishments, but to-day he was to come into line with the other favourites.

And yet he did not come. Normally a punctual man, he was late. Everything was ready—more than ready—and there was no dame.

Suddenly above the ground swell of the traffic was heard, amid the strenuousness of the City Road, the unaccustomed sound of cheers and laughter. "Hurray! Hurray!" floated up to the recording-room from the distant street below, and every head was stretched out to see what untoward thing could be happening. "Hurray! Hurray!" and more laughter. And there was discerned an immense crowd, chiefly errand-boys, surrounding a four-wheeler, from which with the greatest difficulty an old lady of immense proportions, dressed, or rather upholstered, in the gaily-coloured clothes of the century before last, was endeavouring to alight, backwards. "Hurray! Hurray!" cried the boys at every new struggle. At last the emergence was complete, when the old lady, standing upright and shaking down her garments, revealed herself as no other than Herbert Campbell, the idol of "The Lane," who in order to speak a few

words into the funnel of a gramophone had thought it needful to put on every detail of his costume and to make up that acreage of honest, genial physiognomy.

LAURA VISITS THE SICK

See "The Innocent's Progress"—Plate 11

TELEPHONICS

AFTER fighting against bondage for years I am now a slave: I have a telephone.

Although the advantages are many, it means that I have lost the purest and rarest of life's pleasures—which was to ring up from a threepence-in-the-slot call-office (as I continually had to do) and not be asked for the money. This, in many years, has happened to me twice; and only last week I met a very rich man who is normally of a gloomy cast, across whose features played a smile brilliant with triumph, for it also had just happened to him.

On the other hand, through having a telephone of my own I now escape one of the commonest and most tiresome of life's irritations—which is to wait outside one of these call-offices while the person inside is carrying on a conversation that is not only unnecessary and frivolous, but unending. In London these offices are used both by men and women; but in the suburbs by women only, who may be thought to be romantically engaged but really are reminding their husbands not to forget the fish. The possession of a tele-

phone of one's own, however, does not, in an imperfect world, put an end to the ordeal of waiting. If ever a fairy godmother appeared to me (but after all these years of postponement I can hardly hope for her) with the usual offer of a granted wish, I should think long before I hit upon anything better to ask for than the restoration of all the time I had spent with my own telephone at my ear waiting to be answered. The ordinary delays can be long enough, but for true foretastes of eternity you must sit at the instrument while some one is being fetched from a distant part of the building. This is a foretaste not only of eternity but of perdition, for there is nothing to do; and to have nothing to do is to be damned. If you had a book by you, you could not read it, for your thoughts are not free to wander; all that you are mentally capable of is to speculate on the progress of the messenger to the person who is wanted, upstairs or down, the present occupation of the person who is wanted, and the probable stages of his journey to the receiver. In this employment, minutes, hours, days, weeks even, seem to drag their reluctant length along.

You can imagine also the attitude of the person who is sent for. For the telephone, common as it now is, is still associated with ceremonial. At any rate, I notice that men called to it by

page boys in restaurants and hotels have a special gait of importance proper to the occasion.

The possession of a telephone no doubt now and then simplifies life; but its complications are too many, even if you adopt the sound rule to be more rung against than ringing. One of them is the perplexity incident to delays and misunderstandings, and, above all, as to the constitution of Exchanges. We all, I suppose, have our own idea as to what they are like; there must at one time or other have been photographs in the more informing of the magazines; but I missed them, and, therefore, decline on a vague vision of machinery and wire-eared ladies. A friend is more definite: "A large building," he describes it, "like Olympia, the roof lost in darkness, and pallid women moving about, spinning tops and blowing penny trumpets." To me, as I have suggested, there is more of Tartarus than Olympus about it. A sufficient hell, indeed, for any misspent life, to be continually calling up numbers, and continually being met with the saddest words that are known to men: "Number engaged."

I want to understand the whole telephone system. I want to know how the operators all get to speak exactly alike. Women can be very imitative, I am aware: the chorus girl's transition

from Brixton to the Savoy restaurant can be as natural as the passage of dusk to dawn, and a change of accent is usually a part of it; but it is astonishing how the operators of the different Exchanges resemble each other. They cannot all be one and the same. Miraculous as is everything connected with the telephone—talking quietly over wires that thread the earth beneath the busiest and noisiest of pavements in the world is sufficiently magical—it would be a shade too marvellous for one operator to be everywhere at once. Therefore, there must be many. Is there, then, a school of elocution, where instruction in the most refined form of speech ever known is imparted, together with lessons in the trilling of the letter R? Why should they all say "No replay," when they mean "No reply"? And how do they talk at home? It must be terrible for their relations if they don't come down a peg or two there. The joy with which we recognise a male voice at the Exchange is another proof that woman does not really represent the gentler sex.

But these are by no means all the mysteries as to which I crave enlightenment. I want to know how the odd and alarming noises are made. There is a tapping, as of a woodpecker with delirium tremens, which at once stuns and electrifies the ear. How do they do that, and

do they know what its effect is? And why does one sometimes hear other conversations over other wires, and sometimes not? Rarely are they interesting; but now and then . . . My pen falters as I record the humiliating want of perspicacity—the tragic inability to recognise a tip—which befell me on the morning of June 4th, 1919—in other words, on Derby Day: the day when the art or science of vaticination experienced in England its darkest hour, for every prophet selected The Panther. To my annoyance I had to listen to a long conversation between what seemed to be a bookmaker and his client with regard to money to be placed on Grand Parade. This at the time only irritated me, but afterwards, when Grand Parade had won at 33 to 1, and I recognised the interruption as an effort of the gods on my behalf (had I but ears to hear), how against my folly did I rail!

Telephony, it is clear, both from one's own experience and from reading the letters in the papers, is not yet an exact science. Not, that is, in real life; although on the stage and in American detective novels it seems to be perfect. The actor lifts the receiver, mentions the number, and begins instantly to talk. If he is on the film his lips move like burning rubber and his mouth becomes a shifting cavern. Do the rank

and file of us, I wonder, when telephoning, thus grimace? I must fix up a mirror and see.

There are many good telephone stories. The best that I know is told of a journalist with a somewhat hypertrophied bump of reverence for worldly success, whose employer is a peer. We will call the employer Lord Forthestait and the journalist Mr. Blank. A number of the staff were talking together, in one of the rooms of the newspaper, when the telephone rang.

"You're wanted at the 'phone, Mr. Blank," said the clerk.

Blank, who was just going out to lunch, came back impatiently and snatched at the instrument.

"Yes, what is it?" he snapped out.

"Is that Blank?" came back the reply. "Lord Forthestait speaking."

"Yes, my lord," said Blank, with the meekest deference, removing his hat.

THE WORLD REMEDIAL

JOHN STUART MILL'S fear that the notes of the piano might be used up and tunes give out is as nothing to mine that a time must come when there will be no more whimsical literature in the old book shops for these eyes to alight upon. Meanwhile, to renew my confidence, a friend sends me "The Compleat English Physician, or The Druggist's Shop Opened (the like not hitherto extant")" by William Salmon, who dates his preface "From my house at the Blew Ball by the Ditch-side near Holborn Bridge, London, May 5, 1693." In this exhaustive work the whole of creation, animal, vegetable, and mineral, is levied upon for cures for human ills, any of which are, in the dedication, offered by the author to the Most Serene and Illustrious Princess Mary II., if she feels herself to be in need of physic and will lay her commands upon him.

According to "The Dictionary of National Biography," which, however, does not mention this particular book, William Salmon was born in 1644, and was educated by a mountebank.

After a certain amount of travel, he settled in London as an irregular practitioner, with pills for everything and horoscopes to boot. The suggestion, made in his lifetime, that he himself did not amass the lore that is found in his many and copious volumes, but was merely an amanuensis, has the "Dictionary's" support; but in the preface to "The Compleat English Physician," Salmon is very tart and coarse and emphatic about it with one of his detractors ("the nasty author of an impertinent and scurrilous pamphlet"), claiming to have had thirty years' experience of practical pharmacy. But he must have borrowed too, for thirty years, even with a ten-hours' day, could not have sufficed to gather a tenth of the mysteries contained in this astonishing work.

Although it is exclusively medical, Salmon incidentally hits upon as deadly a formula for anti-social satire as could be imagined, beyond even Swift. Not all the malignity of "Gulliver's Travels" is so powerful to remove the divine from man as this empiric's simple inclusion of him among the animals. Book V. is entitled "Of Man and Beasts," and it begins thus: "Chapter I. Homo, Man & Woman. . . . They are the general inhabitants of the Universal Globe of the Earth and their food is made of Grain, Pulse, Fruits, Flowers, Roots, Herbs, and

the flesh of Beasts, Fowl, Fishes, Insects, etc." Salmon then goes on to enumerate the maladies that the various parts of man (and woman) are good for. His hair, converted to ashes and powdered, will cure the Green Sickness and other disorders too elementary to name. Made into an oil it will ease pains caused by a cold and cause new hair to grow on bald places. The rest of him and of her (I could not possibly go into details—this being not a medical journal and the date being 1920 instead of 1693) is also, either as powder, volatile oil, spirit, essence, salt, magistry, or balsam, beneficial in a vast number of troubles. It is an ironical and exasperating thought that we carry about in our bodies the cures for all the ills that those bodies suffer from.

In most of the sciences the professors of the day know more than their predecessors of yesterday. Knowledge accumulates. But, after dipping into Salmon's twelve-hundred pages, one sighs with relief that the healing art has, since 1693, become comparatively so simple; and when next sending for a doctor we shall thank God for his modern incompleatness. For in Salmon's day, in the pride of compleation, the medical man might have dosed us with our nearest dead neighbour.

Having finished the examination of man as

a treasury of restoratives, Salmon passes on to Alces, the Elk; Antilopus, the Antelope; and Asinus, the Ass. All the beasts are therapeutically useful to man, but few more so than Asinus, the Ass. Howsoever valuable a living donkey may be, he cannot compare with the versatility of a donkey defunct when resolved into drugs. Equus, the Horse; Capra, the Goat; and Cercopithecus, the Monkey, are also each a well-stocked chemist's shop. In fact, nothing that moves, whether on four legs or two, fails to yield up a potent elixir; but to find man among them is the shock. Right and proper enough that the Lord of Creation should extract lotions and potions for his ailments from his soulless inferiors; but not from himself. That is a lowering thought.

The birds of the air too. Thus: the flesh of Alauda, the Lark, will ease the cholick: a thing to remember at Ye Old Cheshire Cheese. Alcedo, the Kingfisher, reduced to powder and mixed with powder made from a man's skull, and a little salt of amber, is excellent against the epilepsy. A number of swallows beaten to pieces in a mortar (terrible thought!) produce a residuum that will prevent the falling sickness. For restoring a lost memory the heart of Hirundo, the Swallow, to which the filings of a man's skull (Mr. Pelman's for choice?) and

dried peony roots are added, is sovran. Even the nest of Hirundo, the Swallow, is of use; made into a cataplasm it not only eases a quinsie, but will cure the bite of a serpent. Nor are the fragile systems of Rubecula, the Robin Redbreast, and Regulus, the Wren (shade of Blake!), without medicinal utility. The flesh of Lucinia, the Nightingale, cures consumptives, while its gall mixed with honey makes an excellent collyrium for the eyes; but singing-birds surely should be exempted from active service under druggists. "Yet" (you say) "if the nightingale cures consumption, it might have cured Keats." True, but had Keats accepted that remedy he would not have been Keats.

It is when writing of Lucinia, the Nightingale, that Salmon interpolates a remark—wholly gratuitous—which gives him a place apart among authors. He perpetrates a curiosity of literature: the most unpoetical thing ever written. "A Mr. Wilkinson, a clergyman," is merely the least poetical line in poetry; but to say that Lucinia, the Nightingale, "grows fat in autumn," is positively to undo magic.

WHAT THE SUN DID NOT SEE—FOR FAR TOO LONG

ONCE upon a time," said the Sun, "there was a meadow surrounded by a flint walk, where I caused the buttercups to shine like burnished gold, and where the grass was high and green and as long as the pony and the donkey who inhabited the meadow would allow it to be. Here and there was a cowslip; while near the house were hen-coops with old hens in them whose anxious heads protruded through the bars querulously shouting instructions to their fluffy children.

"Such," said the Sun, "was the meadow, which was interesting to me chiefly because it was the playground of a small but very vigorous and restless boy named Nobby, whose merry inquiring face it gave me peculiar pleasure to tan and to freckle.

"A small boy can do," said the Sun, "a thousand things in a meadow like this, even without the company of a donkey and a pony, and Nobby did them all; while his collection of performing wood-lice was unique.

"But a morning came when he was absent. I was shining at my best, the buttercups were glowing, there was even an aeroplane manœuvring in the blue—which is still, I notice, a certain lure to both young and old—but no Nobby. The wood-lice crept about or rolled themselves into balls, all unnoticed and immune.

" 'This is very odd,' I heard the pony say; 'he's never neglected us before.'

" 'Passing strange,' said the donkey, who affected archaic speech. 'And on so blithe and jocund a morn too.'

"So saying they resumed their everlasting meal, but continually turned their eyes to the garden-gate through which Nobby would have to pass. I also kept my eyes wide for him; but all in vain; and what made it more perplexing was that Nobby's mother came in and fed the chickens, and Nobby's aunt came in with a rug and a book and settled down to be comfortable; and that meant that the boy was not absent on a visit to the town, because one of them would have gone too.

" 'That settles it,' said the donkey, who had, for an ass, quite a lot of sense: 'Nobby is ill.'

"The donkey was right—or approximately so, as I afterwards found out. Nobby was ill. That is to say, he was in bed, because that morning he had sneezed—not through looking up at me,

but for no reason at all—and his mother, who was a very careful mother, had at once fetched the clinical thermometer and taken his temperature, and behold it was a hundred. So Nobby was not allowed to get up, but now lay there watching my rays pouring into the room, and listening to the buzz of the aeroplane, and longing to be out in the meadow with the donkey and the pony and the wood-lice.

"That, however, would never do; for 'It all comes,' his mother had said, 'of sitting about in that long grass so much, and so early in the year too'—a line of argument hardly likely to appeal to a small and vigorous boy who does not reckon summer by dates and to whom prudence is as remote as one-pound Treasury notes.

"Anyway," said the Sun, "he was paying for it now, for was he not in bed and utterly sick of it, while the rest of the world was out and about and, warmed and cheered by me, completely jolly? Moreover, he didn't feel ill. No self-respecting boy would, of course, admit to feeling ill ever; but Nobby was genuinely unconscious of anything wrong at all. Not, however, until his temperature went down would he be allowed to get up; that was the verdict. But that was not all. Until it came down he would be allowed nothing but slops to eat.

"His mother took his temperature again be-

fore lunch, and it was still a hundred; and then at about half-past four, when human beings, I understand, get a little extra feverish, and it was still a hundred; and then at last came the night, and Nobby went to sleep confident that to-morrow would re-establish his erratic blood.

"On the morrow he woke long before any one else," said the Sun, "and sat up and saw that I was shining again, without the vestige of a cloud to bother me, and he felt his little body to see how hot it was, and was quite sure that at last he was normal again, but he couldn't tell until his mother was up and about. The weary hours went by, and at last she came in just before breakfast with the thermometer in her hand.

" 'I'm certain I'm all right to-day,' I heard Nobby say. 'I feel quite cool everywhere.'

"But, alas and alack," said the Sun, "he was a hundred still.

" 'My poor mite!' his mother exclaimed, and Nobby burst into tears.

" 'Mayn't I get up? Mayn't I get up?' he moaned; 'I feel so frightfully fit.' But his mother said no, not till the temperature had gone down. You see," added the Orb of Day, "when Nobbies are only-sons and those only-sons' fathers are fighting the enemy, mothers have to be more than commonly cautious and

particular. You will wonder perhaps why she didn't send for the doctor, but it was for two reasons, both womanly ones, and these were that (*a*) she didn't like the *locum,* her own doctor being also at the War, and (*b*) she believed in bed and nursing as the best cure for everything.

"And so all through another long day—and when you are vigorous and robust, like Nobby, and accustomed to every kind of impulsive and adventurous activity, day can be, in bed, appallingly long—Nobby was kept a prisoner, always with his temperature at a hundred, and always with nothing to bite, and growing steadily more and more peevish and difficult, so much so that his mother became quite happy again, because it is very well known that when human invalids are testy and impatient with their nurses they are getting better.

"But when on the third morning, although Nobby's temper had become too terrible for words, his temperature was still a hundred, his mother began to be alarmed again. 'It's very strange,' she said to her sister, 'but he seems perfectly well and cool, and yet the thermometer makes him still a hundred. What do you think we ought to do?'

"Nobby's aunt, who was a wise woman, although unmarried, went up and examined her nephew for herself. 'He certainly looks all

right to me,' she said, 'and he feels all right too. Do you think that the thermometer might be faulty? Let me try it'; and with these words Nobby's aunt shook the thermometer down and then put it under her tongue and gave it a good two minutes, and behold it said a hundred; and then Nobby's mother shook it down and tried it and gave it a good two minutes, and behold it said a hundred; and the cook was a hundred too, and the gardener was a hundred, and the girl who came in to help was a hundred, and probably the donkey would have been a hundred, and the pony a hundred, if they had been tested, because a hundred was the thermometer's humorous idea of normal; and so," added the Sun, "Nobby's mother and aunt rushed upstairs two or three at a time, having a great sense of justice, and pulled him out of bed and dressed him and hugged him and told him to be happy once more.

"And a couple of seconds after this," said the Sun, bringing the story to a close. "I saw him again."

TWO OF MARTHA'S SONS

MR. KIPLING, dividing, in that fine poem, men into the Sons of Martha and the Sons of Mary—the Sons of Martha being the servants and the Sons of Mary the served—characteristically lays his emphasis on those who make machinery to move. Thus:

The Sons of Mary seldom bother, for they have inherited that good part,
But the Sons of Martha favour their Mother of the careful soul and the troubled heart;
And because she lost her temper once, and because she was rude to the Lord her Guest,
Her Sons must wait upon Mary's Sons, world without end, reprieve or rest.

It is their care, in all the ages, to take the buffet and cushion the shock.
It is their care that the gear engages—it is their care that the switches lock.
It is their care that the wheels run truly—it is their care to embark and entrain,
Tally, transport, and deliver duly the Sons of Mary by land and main.

Mr. Kipling, as I say, is thinking more of highly trained and efficient operatives than of

the quieter ministrants; but, after all, some of Mary's Sons—possibly the majority of them—stay at home and refrain from running the Empire, and these too count upon their cousins for assistance.

A very large number of Martha's Sons, for example, become waiters; and waiters are a race to whom insufficient justice has been done by men of letters. There should be a Book of Waiters, as there was a Book of Doctors and a Book of Lawyers by the late Cordy Jeaffreson, and a Book of the Table by the late Dr. Doran. Old waiters for choice: men who have mellowed in their calling; men who have tasted wines for themselves and studied human nature when it eats and is vulnerable. I wish somebody would compile it. It should be a cosmopolitan work: England's old waiters must be there, and France's, upon whom most clubmen of any age ought to be able to enlarge fruitily. In fact, all well-stored Bohemian memories in London and Paris should yield much. And Ireland's old waiters most conspicuously must be there; but whoever is to write this book must hasten to collect the material, for in Ireland, I am told, the old waiter is vanishing. An elderly Irish gentleman with whom I was talking recently—or, rather, to whom I was listening as he searched his memory for drolleries of the past

—said that the disappearance, under modern conditions, of the old humorous independent waiters of his earlier day is the one which he personally most regretted. No longer, said he, are to be found, except very occasionally, these worthy friends of the traveller—Martha's Sons at their best, or, at any rate, at their most needed. Slow they may have been, not always strictly sober, and often despotic; but they were to be counted upon as landmarks: they extended a welcome, they fed the hungry (in time), they slaked the thirsty (more quickly), and they made remarks amusing enough to fortify their good points and palliate their bad. "There was an old fellow named Terence at Limerick," said my friend, and there followed two or three characteristic anecdotes of old Terence at Limerick. "There was old Tim at Tralee," and he painted old Tim for me in a few swift strokes—red nose, creaking legs, and all. What though his nose was red and his legs creaked, Tralee is no longer worth visiting, because Tim is not there. That was the burden of the lament. These old fellows have passed, and the new waiters, most of whom are foreigners or girls, can never mature into anything comparable with them.

Two of my friend's stories I may tell. One is of old Dennis at Mallow, who on being asked if the light in the coffee-room could not be made

brighter, said, in that charming definitive Irish way, that it could not. "Is it always like this?" my friend then inquired. "It is not, sorr," said old Dennis; "it is often worse." Not a great anecdote, but you must brave the horrors of St. George's Channel to meet with these alluring unexpectednesses of speech. Imagine an English waiter thus surprising one! The other story is of old Florence, head waiter at a certain Irish yacht club. Some sojourners in the neighbourhood, having been elected honorary members for the period of their visit, asked a few American friends to dine there, and then, even while in the boat on their way to dinner, suddenly realised that honorary members are entitled to no such privileges. It was decided to put the case to old Florence. "Have you a rule against honorary members inviting guests?" "We have, sorr," said he. "Is it very strictly enforced? I mean, would there be any risk in breaking it?" "There would not, sorr. The only rule in this club that is never broken, sorr, is the one which forbids gratuities to be given to the waiters."

For those Sons of Martha who make their living—and not a bad one—by ministering to their hungry fellow-creatures there is no call to feel sorry. They are often not only richer but happier than their customers, and when the time

comes they retire to snug little houses (of which they not infrequently own a row) with a competence, and pass the evening of life with their pipe and glass, their friends and grandchildren, moving serenely, if perhaps with a shade too plantigrade a step (the waiters' heritage), to the grave. No call, as I say, to feel sorry for them; but what of those other Sons of Martha, the railway porters, who while helping us to travel and get away from home never travel or get away from home themselves, and for ever are carrying or wheeling heavy trunks or searching for visionary cabs?

The mere fact of never having a holiday is not in itself distressing. Holidays often are overrated disturbances of routine, costly and uncomfortable, and they usually need another holiday to correct their ravages. Men who take no holidays must not, therefore, necessarily become objects of our pity. But I confess to feeling sorry for those servants of the public who apparently not only never take a holiday themselves, but who spend all their lives in assisting others to get away.

It is probably no privation to a bathing-machine man never to enter the sea; uproariously happy in that element as his clients can be, their pleasure, in which he has no share, does not, I imagine, embitter his existence. Similarly,

since a waiter either has eaten or is soon to eat, we need not waste sympathy on his unending task of setting seductive dishes before others. But it is conceivable that some of those weary and dejected men whom one sees at Victoria Station, for example, in the summer, eternally making an effort, however unsuccessful, to cope with the exodus of Londoners to the south coast, really would like also to repose on Brighton beach. But they may not. Their destiny is for ever to help others to that paradise, and remain at Victoria themselves. Just as Moses was denied the Children of Israel's Promised Land, so are the porters. The engine-driver can go, the stoker can go, the guard can go,—indeed, they must go,—but the porters get no nearer than the carriage doors and then wheel back again. And if the plight of the porters at Victoria is unenviable, think of that of the porters at the big termini on the other side of London and elsewhere when they read the labels on the luggage which they handle!—labels for the west, for the land of King Arthur; labels for the north, for delectable Highland retreats; labels for Northumberland and Yorkshire; labels for the east coast; labels for Kerry and Galway and Connemara.

FREAKS OF MEMORY

IT was my fortune not long since to meet again, in the flesh, the most famous of our prophets—Old Moore, whose cautious vaticination is on sale even in the streets. To my dismay he did not recognise me. Not that a want of recognition is so rare—very far from it—but the surprise is that a being gifted with such preternatural vision should thus fail, when I, who am only an ordinary person, knew him again instantly. Long habits of fixing his penetrating gaze on the murky future have no doubt rendered the backward look less simple to him. Anyway, there we stood, I challenging him to remember me and he failing to do so. This momentary superiority of my own poor wits over those of a man who (undismayed by the refusal of events always to fall into line) foretells so much, uplifted me; but the untrustworthiness of memory is so constant and lands one in such embarrassments that it is foolish for anyone to boast.

Among the marvels of the human machine, memory is, indeed, strangest. The great bewildering fact of memory at all—of the miracle of the brain—is, of course, as far beyond our

finite apprehension as the starry heavens. Of that I never dare to think. But the minor caprices of memory may, fittingly enough, engage our wonder. The lawlessness of our prehensile apparatus, for example—the absurdly unreasoning system of selection of such things as are to be permanent—how explain these? And why should memory be subject also to that downward tendency in life which forces us always to fight if we would save the best? It would have been just as easy, at the start, when the whole affair was in the making, to have given an upward impulse. That was not done, but the memory, at any rate, being all spirit, might have been exempted from the general law. But no; as we grow older, not only do we remember with less and less accuracy, but of what we retain much is inferior to that which once we had but now have lost.

I, for example, who once had long passages not only from the great poets, but also from the less great but often more intimate poets,—such as Matthew Arnold and William Cory, to mention two favourites,—at the tip of the tongue, now have to recite myself to sleep with a Bab Ballad. That piece of nonsense never fails me, but I cannot at this moment give the right sequence of any two of the quatrains of the "Rubáiyát" of Omar Khayyám, although once,

and for years, I had the whole poem complete too. I would rather have been left the wis[illegible] Persian than Gilbert's "Etiquette," but the jade Memory had other views.

Any prose that I might once have learned naturally faded first, because there was no rhyme or metre to assist retention; but why is it that there is one sentence which, never wholly mine, flits so often before the inward eye? It is in that story of Mr. Kipling's of the mutinous elephant who refused to work because his master was too long absent. This master, one Dheesa (you will remember), having obtained leave for a jaunt, exceeded his term; and the sentence which recurs to me, hazily and hauntingly, often twice a day and usually once, with no apparent reason or provocation, is this: "Dheesa had vagabonded along the roads till he met a marriage procession of his own caste, and drinking, dancing, and tippling, had drifted past all knowledge of the lapse of time." Now, surely, out of all the thousands of books which I have read and more or less dimly remember, it is very strange that this should be almost the only sentence that is photographed on the mind.

Once I knew many psalms: I know them no longer, but I have never forgotten a ridiculous piece of dialogue in a book called "The World of Wit and Humour," which I was studying, on

weekdays, at the same time, how many years ago:

"Father, I have spilt the butter. What shall I do?"

"Rub it briskly with a woollen fabric."

"Why?"

"Because friction generates caloric, which volatises the oleaginous particles of the stearine matter."

—And once I knew many psalms.

One of the odd things about what we call loss of memory is that it is catching. How often when one person forgets a name well known to him does his companion, to whom it is equally well known, forget it too. Why is that? The other day I had an excellent example of this curious epidemic. It was necessary for the name of a certain actor—not a star, but a versatile repertory actor of distinction—to be recalled in order that a letter to him might quickly be despatched. I had forgotten his name, but I described him and his methods with sufficient accuracy for every one (there were about six of us) to recognise him. Some of us could even say in what parts we had seen him and compare notes as to his excellence, and yet his name absolutely eluded one and all. Why? We all knew it; why did we unanimously fail to know it then?

We parted intent upon obtaining this neces-

sary information, my last sapient words being that to the best of my belief his first name was Joseph and his second began with P. On meeting again the next day, each of us had it pat enough, and it had broken upon each, more or less suddenly, during the night. Since the name was Michael Sherbrooke, you will understand why, in my case, its arrival was peculiarly gratifying. If I am not now known to those others as Mrs. Nickleby, it is only because they are so kind-hearted.

The great mystery is, Where, while one is forgetting them, are the things one forgets, but suddenly will remember again? Where are they lurking? This problem of their whereabouts, their capacity to hide and elude, distresses me far more than one's inability to call them from the vasty deep of the brain. Or are they, perhaps, not there at all? Do they not, perhaps, have evenings out, times off for lunch and so forth, and thus we sometimes miss them? Or can there perhaps be some vast extra-mural territory of the brain from which facts have to be fetched—as, if one would consult old newspapers at the British Museum, one must wait until the volumes can be brought from Hendon? The fact that they always, or nearly always, return, sooner or later, rather supports these theories.

THE MORAL DRESSING-TABLE

THE prettiest little book that ever I saw lies before me. It is called "The Toilet," and was published by the author in 1821 and sold by Mr. Sams, bookseller to H.R.H. the Duke of York, at No. 1 St. James's Street; for princes in those days had their own booksellers no less than their own wine-cellars. Times have changed, and to-day No. 1 St. James's Street is a block of flats, and the Duke surveys London from the top of a column of stone.

The author of "The Toilet" was "S. G." (standing for Stacey Grimaldi), and the purpose of his book—so laudable then and how unnecessary now!—was to make young women better. This task was to be performed by means of a preface and a number of verses, but chiefly by a series of copperplate engravings with movable covers. I have seen old gardening books on this principle, by Capability Brown and others, in which the potentialities of gentlemen's places are made evident by the same mechanical means. Thus, by lifting up one clump of trees you see where the house

could most advantageously stand, and by lifting up another you gaze along the lovely avenue that ought to be planted there, and so forth; but I never saw good manners and high ideals inculcated in this way. That they can be "The Toilet" proves.

But let me explain. The articles illustrated are those that are found in ladies' boudoirs, such as mirrors, and jewel case, and bottles of essence—all very charmingly designed as though by a Chippendale. Indeed, the copy which lies before me—as pretty a little book, did I say? as ever I saw—is known by its owner as "The Chippendale Book"; and never could the effort to get gentleness and the best manners into an impressionable female nature be more ingeniously or ingratiatingly made. Imagine, now, the fair one opening at the preface, where she reads at once these words: "I request your acceptance of a few appendages to your toilet, of extreme beauty and value, though some of them may be at variance with modern fashions." She then turns on and finds that the appendages consist of an Enchanting Mirror, a Wash to Smooth Wrinkles, some Superior Rouge, some Matchless Ear Rings, a Fine Lip Salve, a Mixture to Sweeten the Voice, and so forth—each delicately drawn.

Before lifting the cover of the mirror she

reads that it is long since many of the gay inhabitants of the town have decorated themselves before it, and then, lifting the cover, discovers the word "Humility" on the glass. Fancy the shock to the frivolous and vain! But humility is not all; Uriah Heep had that and still was a most undesirable person, and so she must read on, all recipiency. Doing so she learns that it is singular that although we do generally wear ear-rings similar to those in the jewel case in the presence of a superior, we are apt to cast them off in the company of our inferiors; and, lifting the lid of the case, she finds the word "Attention" within. And so on through the book. The Wash to Smooth Wrinkles turns out to be Contentment; the Universal Beautifier is Good Humour; the Best White Paint is Innocence; the Superior Rouge is Modesty; the Mixture giving Sweetness to the Voice is Mildness and Truth (where is the young woman who any longer wants mildness?), and the Finest Lip Salve is Cheerfulness.

Finally we come to a very beautiful flowered pot—I wish you could see it—containing "The Late King's Eye Water"—the late King being George III, the father of the Prince whose own particular bookseller put forth this little volume. All the time, from the first moment of opening it, I had the feeling that somewhere hovering

around or over "The Toilet" was the spirit of the courtier. Its blend of discretion and elegance is such as a palace mentor could hardly be without, and the description of the Late King's Eye Water settled it. "You are perhaps aware that our late much-beloved King possessed bad sight, and, doubtless, many different eye waters were prescribed for his use; but I can assure you, that whatever else the good Monarch might have used, he invariably possessed some of the accompanying description; it was by him recommended to our present Sovereign [George the Fourth], as also to his own beloved and illustrious Daughters; it has been by them constantly used, and their example has diffused it throughout the British Empire." On lifting the cover of the pot containing the Late King's Eye Water (which he recommended to his eldest son) we find it to contain "Benevolence"; but a certain poem by Moore, addressed to George IV after the death of Sheridan, would suggest that the collyrium was not at any rate "constantly" used.

THACKERAY'S SCHOOLFELLOW

IF the measure of an artist is the accuracy with which the life of his times is reflected in his work, and the width of his range, then John Leech, the centenary of whose birth was August 29, 1917, is the greatest artist that England has produced. But since such a claim as that would submerge us in controversial waters, let it rather be said that Leech is the most representative artist that England has produced. The circumstances that he worked in black and white and was chiefly concerned with the humorous aspect of men and manners do not affect the position.

The outlines of Leech's life are very simple. He was born in London on August 29, 1817, the son of John Leech, proprietor of the once very prosperous London Coffee-House on Ludgate Hill, who was said to be something of a draughtsman and was also a Shakespeare enthusiast. The child took early to the pencil; and it is recorded that Flaxman, a friend of the family, found him at a tender age, on his mother's knee, drawing well enough to be en-

couraged. The great sculptor's advice was that the boy, whom he thought to be clearly destined for an artist, should be permitted to follow his own bent. Three years later Flaxman seems to have repeated this counsel. At seven, Leech was sent to school at Charterhouse, then in its old London quarters; and the story is told that Mrs. Leech, who probably thought seven far too young, took a room which overlooked the playground in order secretly to watch her little son, thus displaying a sympathetic solicitude which that son inherited and carried through life. At Charterhouse Leech remained until he was sixteen, among his school-fellows being Thackeray; but as Thackeray was six years his senior it is unlikely that they saw much of each other as boys, although they were always glad later in life, when they became very intimate colleagues on *Punch*, to recall their schooldays and extol their school.

On leaving, Leech went to Bart.'s to learn to be a surgeon, and there by curious and fortunate chance fell in with a congenial fellow-student named Percival Leigh, whose interest in comic journalism was to play a very important part in Leech's career. Leigh had two friends who shared his literary tastes and ambitions—Albert Smith, a medical student at the Middlesex Hospital, and Gilbert Abbott à Beckett, a young

barrister, these forming a humorous band of brothers to which Leech made a very welcome addition. Leigh was seriously concerned also with medicine, but there is no evidence that Leech burnt any midnight oil in its pursuit, although he made some excellent anatomical drawings. The popularity of the London Coffee-House on Ludgate Hill meanwhile declining, a less expensive instructor than St. Bartholomew became necessary; and Leech was placed with the ingenious Mr. Whittle of Hoxton, who, under the guise of a healer, devoted most of his attention to pigeons and boxing. Mr. Whittle of Hoxton (who is to be found under the name of Rawkins in Albert Smith's novel, "The Adventures of Mr. Ledbury," which Leech illustrated) may not appreciably have extended his pupil's knowledge of therapeutics, but he is our benefactor in quickening his interest in sport. Leech's next mentor was Dr. John Cockle, son of the Cockle of the pills; and then, the paternal purse being really empty, he, at the age of eighteen, flung physic to the dogs and trusted for a living to his pencil, which, since Charterhouse had the most indifferent of drawing-masters, was still untrained.

In those days there were many ephemeral satirical sheets, in addition to the magazines, to offer employment to the comic draughts-

man, and Leech did not starve; his two experiences of the inside of a sponging-house being due to his good nature rather than to financial foolishness of his own. His first publication was a slender collection of street types entitled "Etchings and Sketchings," by A Pen, 1835. He tried also political caricatures and drew bruisers for "Bell's Life in London." In 1836 he was among those draughtsmen (Thackeray was another) who competed without success for Seymour's post as illustrator of a series of humorous papers describing the proceedings of the Pickwick Club. In 1840 appeared his parody of the Mulready envelope, which was very popular and a real foundation-stone for the young artist, and Percival Leigh's "Comic Latin Grammar" and "Comic English Grammar," the illustrations to which fortified the impression which the Mulready skit had made, and established the fact that a new pictorial humorist of resource and vigour had appeared.

In 1841 *Punch* was founded, with Mark Lemon as its editor and Leigh on its staff; and for Leech to join up was merely a matter of time. His first efforts were tentative, but by 1844, when Thackeray was also a power on the staff, he had become the paper's strong man, and its strong man he remained until his death twenty years after. *Punch* had a great

personnel, courage, and sound ideas, but without Leech's sunny humanity week after week it is unlikely to have won its way to such complete popularity and trust. It was he, more than any other contributor, who drove it home to the heart of the nation.

Leech's cartoons were for the most part suggested to him, the outcome of discussion round the Mahogany Tree (which is made of pine); but to a larger extent probably than with any of his colleagues or successors the social drawings, by which he is now best known and by which he will live, were the fruits of his own observation, visual and aural. That is to say, he provided words as well as drawings. He also followed the line of least resistance. It was enough for him to think an incident funny, to set it down, and by the time it had passed through that filter—a blend of humane understanding and humane fun—which he kept in his brain, it was assured of a welcome by *Punch's* readers too. To-day the paper is a little more exacting, a little more complex: a consequence possibly, in some measure, of the fertility and universality of its earlier giant, who anticipated so many jokes. To-day, as it happens, there is more of the Leech spirit in *Life*, where absurdity for its own sake is to a greater extent cultivated. But for twenty years

that spirit permeated and dominated *Punch*. Leech had a great chance and he rose to it. Never before had things been made so easy for a satirical artist with alert eyes. Hogarth had had to plan and struggle to get his engravings before the public; Gillray and Rowlandson had only the print-sellers as a medium; but Leech had an editor who appreciated him and gave him his head, and employers who paid handsomely, while his work appeared in a paper which increased its circulation with every number. That is to say, he knew that he had an audience: no small incentive. The result is that "Pictures of Life and Character" is the completest survey of the social England of his times that any artist has ever made or is likely to make.

To-day this inexhaustible work in three immense volumes is out of print, but there never was a book that better deserved continuous accessibility. It is Leech's momument, and he has no other. One learns from it, while laughing the honestest of laughter, how inveterate a plagiarist from herself is Dame Fashion. The number of drawings which need only the slightest modernizing change to be telling now is extraordinary. Leech missed nothing; and the world is always coming full circle.

The criticism has too often been made that

Leech could not draw. Placed beside Keene or Phil May he is, it is true, wanting in inevitableness; his line is merely efficient, never splendid; yet sometimes he could draw amazingly and get the very breath of life into a figure. In particular was he a master of gesture, and now and then his landscapes are a revelation. But the resplendent fact is that he could draw well enough; he did, as Thackeray said, what he wished to do; that is proved by his triumph. A man who cannot draw does not get all his fellow-countrymen following his pencil in a rapture (as though it were the Pied Piper's whistle) as Leech did for twenty years. Du Maurier, who admired him immensely, hit on a happy comparison when he said that Leech was "a ballad-writer among draughtsmen," or, in other words, he had simplicity, lucidity, movement, and a story. It has to be remembered, too, that Leech did single-handed what ever since his day it has needed a syndicate to accomplish. He, himself and alone, was cartoonist, social draughtsman, low-life draughtsman, and the provider of hunting scenes. If the Volunteers were to be chaffed, Leech's was the hand; if the priceless Mr. Briggs was to be invented and kept busy, Leech was his impresario. And it was he also who

drew the prettiest girls in what Thackeray called "Mr. Punch's harem."

All his life, after finding himself, Leech worked too hard, being, although well paid, in some mysterious way continually either in debt or about to be. He was also uniformly behind time; and Mark Lemon used humorously to bemoan half his days misspent in cabs between the *Punch* office and the artist's various residences collecting his belated drawings. Leech, however, when once he had made up his mind, drew very rapidly, and his productiveness was amazing, for besides his *Punch* work he illustrated a large number of books, including (which some people would call his masterpiece) the sporting novels of Surtees.

In private life—but all his life was private—Leech was not less simple than that other great Carthusian, Colonel Newcome. He loved his family, rode his horse Red Mullet whenever there was a free moment, and as often as possible had a day's run with the Puckeridge hounds, not only for enjoyment, but in order that that very important section of his work, his hunting scenes, might not languish. He was fond of dinner parties, both as host and guest, and after them preferred conversation to cards. He sang lugubrious songs in a deep, melancholy voice, with his eyes fixed upwards—the favourite

being Barry Cornwall's "King Death," the words of which, Dickens averred, were inscribed on the ceiling in mystic characters discernible only by the singer. He told stories well, but the record of good things said by him is meagre, and his letters are singularly free from humorous passages. Once, however, when a liberty had been taken with him by a public man, he threatened "to *draw* and defend himself"; and there is a pleasant story of his retort to some rowdy inebriated men in Kensington who excused themselves by saying that they were Foresters: "Then, why the devil don't you go to the forest and make a din there?" Noise was, indeed, his bane. He had double windows in his house, but was always in danger of headaches and shattered nerves from street sounds and, in particular, barrel organs. It is even said that street music led to his early death; but that probably was only indirectly. He died of overwork, aged forty-seven.

Leech's friends were devoted to him, as he to them. Thackeray came first, and indeed once he said that he loved him more than any man, although on another occasion it was FitzGerald and Brookfield whom he named. Dickens and Leech were friends as well as collaborators. It is to Dean Hole, with whom Leech took the "Little Tour in Ireland" in 1858, that we

must go for the best description of his appearance—"A slim, elegant figure, over six feet in height, with a grand head 'on which nature had written Gentleman,' with wonderful genius in his ample forehead; wonderful penetration, observation, humour in his blue-grey Irish eyes, and wonderful sweetness and sympathy and mirth about his lips, which seemed to speak in silence."

Of Leech's genius and accomplishment no one has written better than Dr. John Brown in "Horœ Subsecivæ," third series. Millais, who coached Leech in oil painting for his exhibition of enlarged scenes from the career of Mr. Briggs, also was his close friend; while Trelawny, whom Millais painted, claimed to have loved Leech next only to Shelley. Another artist friend was W. P. Frith, who became his biographer. All his friends testify to the sweetness of his nature and the purity of his character, while the two great novelists of his day, writing of his work—Dickens of his "Rising Generation" and Thackeray of the "Pictures of Life and Character"—used independently the phrase that he came to his task like "a gentleman." In those days gentlemen, at any rate in public places, were less uncommon than now; but even then Leech was conspicuous.

It is perhaps with Dickens and Thackeray

that he will be most closely associated by posterity. He stands between them as a fellow-Victorian colossus. All three were doing, in different ways, the same work—that is to say, they were selecting and fixing, for all time, their time; and all three were distinguished by that remarkable abundance which makes the middle years of the last century so astonishing to us. Dickens, Thackeray, Carlyle, Macaulay, Ruskin, Trollope, Leech, in England; Dumas, Balzac, Hugo, Doré, in France. What rivulets to-day compared with those floods!

Leech died prematurely (in his father's arms, while a children's party was in progress in his house) on October 29, 1864, less than a year after Thackeray. "How happy," said Miss Thackeray (afterward Lady Ritchie), "my father will be to meet him!" *Punch's* tribute contained this sentence: "Society, whose every phase he has illustrated with a truth or grace and a tenderness heretofore unknown in satiric art, gladly and proudly takes charge of his fame." No words to-day, fifty-six years after, can improve on it; nor has in the interim any greater social delineator or humaner genius arisen.

IN RE PHYSIOGNOMY

I. Identification

MANY summers ago I was on one of David MacBrayne's steamers on the way to a Scotch island. Among the few passengers was an interesting man with whom I fell into conversation. He was vigorous, bulky, tall, with a pointed grey beard and a mass of grey hair under a Panama, and he was bound, he told me, for a well-known fishing-lodge, whither he went every August. He had been a great traveller and knew Persia well; he had also been in Parliament, and one of his sons was in the siege of Mafeking. So much I remember of his affairs; but his name I did not learn. We talked much about books, and I introduced him to Doughty's "Arabia Deserta."

I have often thought of him since and wondered who he was, and whenever I have met fishermen or others likely to be acquainted with this attractive and outstanding personality I have asked about him; but never with success. And then the other day I seemed really to be

on the track, for I met a man in a club who also has the annual custom of spending a fortnight or so in the same Scotch island, and he claimed to know every one who has ever visited that retired spot.

This is what happened.

"If you're so old an islander as that," I said, "you're the very person to solve the problem that I have carried about for four or five years. There's a man who fishes regularly up there"—and then I described my fellow-passenger. "Tell me," I said, "who he is."

He considered, knitting his brows.

"You're sure you're right in saying he is unusually tall?" he inquired at last.

"Absolutely," I replied.

"That's a pity," he said, "because otherwise it might be Sir Gerald Orpington. Only he's short. Still, he was in Parliament right enough. But, of course, if it was a tall man it's not Orpington."

He considered again.

"You say," he remarked, "that he had been in Persia? Now old Jack Beresford is tall enough and has plenty of hair, but I swear he's never been to Persia, and of course he hasn't a son at all. It's very odd. Describe him again."

I described my man again, and he followed every point on his fingers.

"Well," he said, "I could have sworn I knew every man who ever fished at Blank, but this fellow—— Oh, wait a minute! You say he is tall and bulky and had travelled. Why, it must be old Carstairs. And yet it can't be. Carstairs was never married and was never in Parliament."

He pondered again.

Then he said, "You're sure it wasn't a clean-shaven bald man with a single eyeglass?"

"Quite," I said.

"Because," he went on, 'if he had been, it would have been old Peterson to the life."

"He wasn't bald or clean-shaven," I said.

"You're sure he said Blank?" he inquired after another interval of profound thought.

"Absolutely," I replied.

"Tell me again what he was like. Tell me exactly. I know every one up there; I must know him."

"He was a vigorous, bulky, very tall man," I said, "with a pointed beard and a mass of grey hair under a Panama; and he used to go to Blank every August. He had been a great traveller and knew Persia; he had been in Parliament, and one of his sons was in the siege of Mafeking."

"I don't know him," he said.

In Re Physiognomy

II. Dr. Sullivan

It had been decided that there never was such a resemblance as is to be traced between my homely features and those of a visitor to the same hotel the previous year—Dr. Sullivan of Harley Street. This had become an established fact, irrefutable like a proposition of Euclid, and one of my new friends, and a friend also of the Harley Street physician who had so satisfyingly and minutely anticipated my countenance, made it the staple of his conversation. "Isn't this gentleman," he would say to this and that habitué of the smoking-room as they dropped in from the neighbouring farms at night, "the very image of Dr. Sullivan of Harley Street, who was here last year?" And they would subject my physiognomy to a searching study and agree that I was. Perhaps the nose—a little bigger, don't you think? or a shade of dissimilarity between the chins (he having, I suppose, only two, confound him!), but, taking it all around, the likeness was extraordinary.

This had been going on for some time, until I was accustomed, if not exactly inured, to it, and was really rather looking forward to the time when, on returning to London, I could trump up a sufficient ailment to justify me in calling upon my double in Harley Street and

scrutinising him with my own eyes. But last night my friend had something of a set-back, which may possibly, by deflecting his conversation to other topics, give me relief. I hope so.

It happened like this. We were as usual sitting in the smoking-room, he and I, when another local acquaintance entered—one who, I gathered, had been away for a few weeks and whom I had therefore not yet seen, and who (for this was the really important thing to my friend) consequently had not yet seen me.

In course of time the inevitable occurred. "Don't you think," my friend asked, "that this gentleman is the very image of Dr. Sullivan of Harley Street, who was here last summer?"

"What Dr. Sullivan's that?" the new-comer inquired.

"Dr. Sullivan of Harley Street, who was fishing here last summer. Don't you remember him? The very image of this gentleman."

"The only Dr. Sullivan I know," replied the new-comer, "is Dr. Sullivan of Newcastle. He's a very old man by now. A very learned man too. He has a wonderful private museum. He——"

"No, no, the Dr. Sullivan I mean was from Harley Street—a specialist—who took the Manor fishing last summer and stayed in the hotel."

"Dr. Sullivan of Newcastle is a very old

man—much older than this gentleman," replied the stranger, "and not a bit like him. He's a most interesting personality. He is the great authority on the South Sea Islanders. You should see his collection of Fiji war clubs."

"But that's not the Dr. Sullivan I mean. You must remember him," said my impresario; "we all used to meet evening after evening, just as we're doing now—Dr. Sullivan of Harley Street, the specialist, a clean-shaven man, exactly like this gentleman here. Every one has noticed the likeness."

"Dr. Sullivan of Newcastle has a beard," said the new-comer. "And he's a very old man by now. A great receptacle of miscellaneous learning. He showed me once his collection of coins and medals. He's got coins back to the Roman Emperors and stories about every one of them. His collection——"

"Yes, but——"

"—of idols is amazing. You never saw such comic figures as those natives worship. There's nothing he doesn't collect. He's got a mummy covered with blue beads. He's got skulls from all over the world, showing different formations. It's some years——"

"Yes, but——"

"—since I saw him last, and of course he may be——"

"Yes, but——"

"—dead. But if not, he's a man worth knowing. If ever you go to Newcastle, sir,"—this was to me,—"don't forget about him. But he must be very old by now. He——"

At this point I finished my glass and slipped away to bed. Consulting the mirror as I undressed, I smiled at the reflection that confronted me. "You can sleep more comfortably to-night," I said, "for there are signs that you are about to have a rest."

THE WORLD'S DESIRE

READING the terms of the agreement which Charlie Chaplin refused in New York early in 1916 I had a kind of nervous collapse. For we English are not so accustomed to great sums of money as the Americans are. Then I bound a wet towel round my head and studied the figures as dispassionately as it is possible to study figures when they run into kings' ransoms. Charlie was offered ten thousand dollars a week for a year: which came then to £104,000 and is now (1920) much more. He was offered one hundred thousand dollars as a bonus for signing the agreement. He was also offered 50 per cent. of any profits made by his films after his salary had been paid. But it did not satisfy him. He refused it.

Now here is a most remarkable state of affairs —that the popular demand for laughter is such that a little acrobatic man with splay feet and a funny way with a cigarette, a hat, and a cane could be offered and could repudiate such colossal wealth as that, and for no other services than to clown it for the cinematoscope. Nor is

the oddity of the matter decreased by the reflection that these figures which make an ordinary person dizzy, belonged to war-time. Charlie Chaplin's rise to affluence and power coincided with the bloodiest struggle in history.

If it is needful for so many people to hold their sides, Charlie's career is justified. He is also the first droll to conquer the whole world. I suppose that it is no exaggeration to say that at any moment of the day and night—allowing for divergences of time—it would be safe to maintain that ten million people are laughing at the Chaplin antics somewhere or other on this planet of ours. For wherever there is a township of more than two thousand inhabitants, there, I imagine, is a cinema; and wherever there is a cinema there is Charlie; not always quite up to date, of course, for managers are wily birds, but in some film, even though an ancient one. Does the Funniest Man on Earth, as he is called, I should like to know, realise what a rôle he fills? Does he stand before the glass and search the recesses of his countenance—which is now far more familiar to the world than any other—and marvel?

Charlie, by the way, has his private uses too. During a recent visit from a young friend, I found that the ordinary gulf that is fixed between a boy in the neighbourhood of ten and a

man in the neighbourhood of five times that number was for once easily bridgeable. We found common ground, and very wisely stuck to it, in the circumstance that each of us had seen Charlie, and, by great good fortune, we had each seen him in his latest sketch. Whenever, therefore, a *longueur* threatened, I had but to mention another aspect of Charlie's genius, and in the discussion that followed all was well.

That Charlie is funny is beyond question. I will swear to that. His humour is of such elemental variety that he could, and probably does, make a Tierra del Fuegan or a Bushman of Central Australia laugh not much less than our sophistical selves. One needs no civilised culture to appreciate the fun of the harlequinade, and to that has Charlie, with true instinct, returned. But it is the harlequinade accelerated, intensified, toned up for the exacting taste of the great and growing "picture" public. It is also farce at its busiest, most furious. Charlie brought back that admirable form of humour which does not disdain the co-operation of fisticuffs, and in which, by way of variety, one man is aimed at, and another, too intrusive, is hit. However long the world may last, it is safe to say that the spectacle of one man receiving a blow meant for another will be popular.

What strikes one quickly is the realisation of

how much harder Charlie works than many of the more illustrious filmers. He is rarely out of the picture, he is rarely still, and he gives full measure. There is no physical indignity that he does not suffer—and inflict. Such impartiality is rare in drama, where usually men are either on top or underneath. In the ordinary way our pet comedians must be on top and untouched. Even the clown, though he receives punishment *en route,* eventually triumphs. But Charlie seldom wins. He remains a butt, or, at any rate, a victim of circumstances whom nothing can discourage or deter. His very essence is resiliency under difficulties, an unabashed and undefeatable front. His especial fascination to me is that life finds him always ready for it—not because he is armed by sagacity, but because he is even better armed by folly. He is first cousin to the village idiot, a natural child of nonsense, licensed up to the hilt, and (like Antæus) every time he rises from a knockdown blow he is the stronger.

It is a proof of the charter which the world has handed to this irresistible humourist that he has been permitted to introduce such an innovation in stage manners as the hitting of women. We only laugh the more when, having had his ears boxed by the fair, he retaliates with double strength. And there is one of his plays in

which every audience becomes practically helpless, as after, with great difficulty, extricating a lady in evening dress from a fountain, he deliberately pushes her in again. It required a Charlie Chaplin to make this tolerable; but such is his radiant unworldliness that we accept it as quite legitimate fun.

One of the chief causes—after the personality of the protagonist—of the popularity of the Chaplin films is probably that in them certain things happen which cannot happen in real life without the intervention of the law, and which are almost always withheld from the real stage. I mean that men so freely assault each other; physical violence has the fullest and most abundant play. Every one longs to see kicks and blows administered, but is usually defrauded, and Charlie is a spendthrift with both. And so cheerfully and victoriously does he distribute them that I wonder an epidemic of such attentions has not broken out in both hemispheres. I know this—that a fat policeman with his back towards the exit of a cinema at the time a Chaplin film had ended would be in great danger from my foot were I then leaving. I should hope for enough self-control; but I could promise nothing, and I should feel that Charlie's example, behind the action, sanctified it. Film life and real life would merge into each other

so naturally that if the policeman repaid me—or attempted to—in any other way but kind, I should feel outraged. To be arrested for it would be like a stab in the back from a friend.

How long Charlie will remain the darling of two hemispheres we must wait to see. But of one thing I am certain, and that is that if at any time the "The Funniest Man on Earth" ceases to compel laughter, he might by slightly changing his methods draw tears. For while he can be as diverting as the greatest glutton for mirth desires, he has all the machinery of dejection too. One of his melancholy smiles is really beautiful.

A CONQUEROR

IT is proverbial that a child may lead a horse to the water, but that not even Mr. Lloyd George, with all his persuasive gifts, can make him drink. An even more difficult task is to induce a horse in the pink of robust health to convey a suggestion of being seriously ill—as I chance just to have discovered. It is not the kind of discovery that one can anticipate; indeed, when I woke on the morning of the day on which it happened and, as is my habit, lay for a while forecasting the possible or probable course of events during the next four-and-twenty hours, this example of equine limitation had no place whatever in my thoughts. To the receptive and adventurous observer many curious things may, however, occur; and no sooner was lunch finished than out of a clear sky fell a friend and a taxi (the god and the machine, if you will), and jointly they conveyed me to as odd a building as I have ever thought to find any horse in, where, under a too searching blue glare, was an assemblage of people as strange as their environment.

There were men in evening dress, toying with cigarettes and bending over women in evening dress; there was an adventuress or two, one with hair in such fluffed-out abundance as can only be a perquisite of notable wickedness; there was a stockman, who was, I fancy, too fond of her; there was a lady in riding boots; there was a comely youth in pyjamas; and there were footmen and page-boys. And all seemed to me made-up to a point of excess. Who could they be? a stranger to the marvel of science might well ask. Strayed revellers? A lost party of masqueraders being held here on bail and photographed for identification purposes?—for there was no doubt about the photography, because the benignant, masterful gentleman with a manuscript, who gave them instructions, every now and then stood aside in order that the camera-operator might direct his machine-gun and turn the handle; but what was said I could not hear, such was the crackling and fizzling of the blue lights.

I cannot pretend to have learned much about the cinema on such a brief visit, but I acquired a few facts. One is that there is no need for any continuity to be observed by the photographer, because the various scenes, taken in any order, can, in some wonderful way, be joined up afterwards, in their true order, and made

consecutive and natural. Indeed, I should say that the superficially casual and piecemeal manner in which a moving drama can be built up is the dominant impression which I brought away from this abode of mystery. The contrast between the magically fluid narrative as unreeled on the screen and the broken, zigzag, and apparently negligent preparation of it in the studio is the sharpest I can imagine. And it increases one's admiration of the man with the scissors and the thread (or however it is done) who unites the bits and makes them smoothly run.

Another fact which I acquired is that unless the face of the cinema performer is painted yellow it comes out an impossible hue, so that to see a company in broad daylight is to have the impression that one has stumbled upon a house party in the Canary Isles. And a third fact is that the actors, while free to say what they like to each other at many times, must, when in a situation illustrated by words thrown on the screen, use those identical words. One reason for this rule is, I am told, that some time ago, in an American film, the producer of which was rather lax, one of the characters spoke to another with an impossible licence, and a school of deaf mutes visiting the picture palace "lip-read" the awful result. The consequence

(America being a wonderful country, with a sufficiency of deaf-and-dumb to warrant protective measures) was the withdrawal of the film and the punishment of the offenders.

Meanwhile, what of the horse? I will tell you.

The camera-operator having taken as much of the fast life in the swell hotel (with the hollow columns without backs to them) as was necessary, including a "still" (as it is called in the movie world—meaning a photograph in the ordinary sense of the term) of the fluffiest of the adventuresses in an expression signifying a blend of depravity and triumph, turned his attention to the loose-box which some attendants had been rapidly constructing, chiefly with the assistance of a truss of straw. Into this apartment was led (through the hotel lounge, and at enormous risk to its plaster masonry) a horse—the horse, in fact, which was to defeat Edison. Of the plot of the play I know nothing. (How could I, having seen it in preparation?) But this I can tell you: that the hero's horse had to be ill; and this also: that the horse in question refused to be ill. In vain for the groom to shake his head, in vain for the hero to say that it had the shivers; never was a horse so far removed from malady, so little in need of the vet. Nor could any device produce the desired

effect. If, then, in the days to come you see on the films a very attractive story with a horse in it, and the horse shivers only in the words on the screen, you will know why. It is because the movies for once met their master.

THE NEWNESS OF THE OLD

IN an American paper I find this anecdote: "An old lady was being shown the spot on which a hero fell. 'I don't wonder,' she replied. 'It's so slippery I nearly fell there myself.' "

Now that story, which is very old in England, and is familiar here to most adult persons, is usually told of Nelson and the *Victory*. Indeed it is such a commonplace with facetious visitors to that vessel that the wiser of the guides are at pains to get in with it first. But in America it may be fresh and beginning a new lease of life; it will probably go on forever in all English-speaking countries, on each occasion of its recrudescence finding a few people to whom it is new.

It is a problem why we tend to be so resentful when an editor or a comedian offers us a jest that has done service before. It is, I suppose, in part at any rate, because we have paid our money, either for the paper or the seat, and we experience the sense of having been defrauded. We have been done, we feel, because the bargain, as we understood it, was that we were purchasing novelty. So that when suddenly an old, old jape, which perhaps we have ourselves related—and that of course is an aggravation of

the grievance—confronts us, we are indignant. But what, one wonders, would a comic paper or a revue that had nothing old in it be like. We can never know.

The odd thing is that we not only resent the age of the joke, even though it is in our own repertory, but we resent the laughter of those to whom it is new—perhaps three-quarters of the audience. How dare they also not have heard it before? is our unspoken question. Not long ago, seated in a theatre next a candid and normally benignant and tolerant friend, I found myself laughing at what struck me as a distinctly humorous remark made by one of London's nonsensical funny men. Engaged in a competition with another as to which had the longer memory, he clinched the discussion by saying that he personally could remember London Bridge when it was a cornfield. To me that was as new as it was idiotic, and I behaved accordingly; but my friend was furious with me. "Good heavens!" he exclaimed with the click of the tongue that usually accompanies such criticism, "fancy digging that up again! It's as old as the hills." And his face grew dark and stern.

What we have to remember, and what might have softened my friend's granite anger had he remembered it, is that a new audience is always

coming along to whom nothing is a chestnut. It is not the most reassuring of thoughts to those who are a little fastidious about ancientry in humour; but it is nature and therefore a fact. Just as every moment (so I used to be told by a solemn nurse) a child is born (she added also that every moment some one dies, and she used to hold up her finger and hush! for me to realise that happy thought), so nearly every moment (allowing for a certain amount of infant mortality) an older child attains an age when it can understand and relish a funny story. To those children every story is original. With this new public, clamorous and appreciative, why do humourists try so hard to be novel? (But perhaps they don't).

I suppose that there are theories as to what is the oldest story, but I am not acquainted with them. That people are, however, quite prepared for every story to be old is proved by the readiness with which, when Mark Twain's "Jumping Frog" was translated into Greek for a School Reader, a number of persons remarked upon the circumstance that the humourist had gone to ancient literature for his jest. For by a curious twist we are all anxious that stories should not be new. Much as we like a new story, we like better to be able to say that to us it was familiar.

The Newness of the Old

Many stories come rhythmically round again. Such, for example, during the Great War, as those with a martial background. I remember during the Boer War hearing of a young man who was endeavouring to enlist, and was rejected because his teeth were defective. "But I want to fight the Boers," he said, "not eat them." Between 1914 and 1918 this excellent retort turned up again, only this time the young man said that he did not want to eat the Germans. I have no doubt that in the Crimean War a similar applicant declared that he did not want to eat the Russians, and a hundred years ago another was vowing that he did not want to eat the French. Probably one could trace it through every war that ever was. Probably a young Hittite with indifferent teeth proclaimed that his desire was to fight the Amalekites and not to eat them. The story was equally good each time; and there has always been a vast new audience for it. And so long as war continues and teeth exist in the human head, which I am told will not be for ever, so long will this anecdote enjoy popularity. After that it will enter upon a new phase of existence based upon defects in the applicant's râtelier, and so on until universal peace descends upon the world, or, the sun turning cold, life ceases.

AUNTS

THE story is told that an English soldier, questioned as to his belief in the angels of Mons, replied how could he doubt it, when they came so close to him that he recognised his aunt among them? People, hearing this, laugh; but had the soldier said that among the heavenly visitants he had recognised his mother or his sister, it would not be funny at all. Suggestions of beautiful affection and touching deathbeds would then have been evoked, and our sentimental chords played upon. But the word aunt at once turns it all to comedy. Why is this?

I cannot answer this question. The reasons go back too far for me; but the fact remains that it has been decided that when not tragic, and even sometimes when tragic, aunts are comic. Not so comic as mothers-in-law, of course; not invariably and irremediably comic; but provocative of mirth and irreverence. Again I say, why? For taken one by one, aunts are sensible, affectionate creatures; and our own experience of them is usually serious enough; they are often very like their sisters our mothers, or

their brothers our fathers, and often, too, they are mothers themselves. Yet the status of aunt is always fair game to the humourist; and especially so when she is the aunt of somebody else.

That the word uncle has frivolous associations is natural, for slang has employed it to comic ends. But an aunt advances nothing on personal property, an aunt is not the public resort of the temporarily financially embarrassed. No nephew Tommy was ever exhorted to make room for his aunt, a lady, indeed, who figures in comic songs far more rarely than grandparents do, and is not prominent on the farcical stage. One cannot, therefore, blame the dramatists for the great aunt joke, nor does it seem, on recalling what novels I can with aunts prominently in them, to be the creation of the novelists. Dickens has very few aunts, and these are not notorious. Betsy Trotwood, David Copperfield's aunt, though brusque and eccentric, was otherwise eminently sane and practical. Mr. F.'s aunt was more according to pattern and Miss Rachel Wardle even more so; but the comic aunt idea did not commend itself to Dickens wholeheartedly. Fiction as a rule has supported the theory that aunts are sinister. Usually they adopt the children of their dead sisters and are merciless to them. Often they tyrannise over

a household. The weight of the novelists is in favour of aunts as anything but comic. There are exceptions, of course, and that fine vivid figure, the "Aunt Anne" of Mrs. W. K. Clifford, stands forth triumphant among the charming; while Sir Willoughby Patterne's twittering choruses are nearer the aunts of daily life. But even they were nigher pathos than ridicule.

I believe that that wicked military wag, Captain Harry Graham, has done more than most to keep the poor lady the aunt in the pillory. This kind of thing from his "Ruthless Rhymes for Heartless Homes" does a lot of mischief:

> In the drinking well,
> Which the plumber built her,
> Aunt Eliza fell—
> We must buy a filter.

How can aunts possibly survive such subtle attacks as that? And again:—

> I had written to Aunt Maud,
> Who was travelling abroad,
> When I heard she'd died from cramp:
> Just too late to save the stamp.

Supposing that the verse had begun

> I had written Cousin Maud

it would have lost enormously. There must be something comic in aunts after all.

Aunts

No child ever quite gets over the feeling of strangeness at hearing his mother called aunt by his cousins. A mother is so completely his own possession, and she so obviously exists for no other purpose than to be his mother, that for her also to be an aunt is preposterous. And then there is the shock of hearing her name, for most children never realise their mother's name at all, their father, the only person in the house who knows it intimately and has the right to use it, usually preferring "Hi" or any loud cry. To Hamlet the situation must have been peculiarly strange, for his mother, after the little trouble with his father's ear, became his aunt too. If it were not that, since our aunts are of an older generation than ourselves, proper respect compels us to address them as aunts, they would not be comic. The prefix aunt does it. If we could call Aunt Eliza, Eliza, without ceremony, as if she were a contemporary, she would be no more joke to us than to her contemporaries, even though she did fall in the well and necessitate that sanitary outlay. Just plain Eliza falling in a well is nothing; but for Aunt Eliza to do so is a scream. It is having to say Aunt Eliza that causes the trouble, for it takes her from the realms of fact and deposits her in those of humour. If aunts really want to acquire a new character they must forbid the prefix.

ON RECITATIONS

ALTHOUGH none of us know what, when the time comes, we can do, to what unsuspected heights we can rise, we are fairly well acquainted with what we cannot do. We may not know, for example, what kind of figure we should cut in a burning house, and even less in a burning ship: to what extent the suddenness and dreadfulness of the danger would paralyse our best impulses, or even so bring out our worst as to make us wild beasts for self-protection. Terrible emotional emergencies are rare, and, since rehearsals are of no use, all that is possible is to hope that one would behave rightly in them. But most of us know with certainty what our limitations are. I, for instance, know that I cannot recite in public and that no circumstances could make me. There is no peril I would not more cheerfully face than an audience, even of friends, met together to hear me, and, worse, see me, on such an occasion. And by recite I do not mean the placid repetition of an epigram, but the downright translation of dramatic verse into gesture and grimace. The

bare idea of such a performance fills me with creeping terror.

The spectacle of any real reciter, however self-possessed and decent, at his work, suffuses me with shame. I myself have in my brief experience of them blushed more for reciters than the whole army of them could ever have blushed for themselves. Even the great humane Brandram when he adopted the falsetto which he deemed appropriate to Shakespeare's women sent the hot tide of misery to my face, while over his squeaking in "Boots at the Holly Tree Inn" I had to close my eyes. Brandram, however, was not strictly a reciter in the way that I mean: rather was he an actor who chose to do a whole play by himself without costumes or scenery. The reciters that I mean are addicted to single pieces, and are often amateurs (undeterred and undismayed by the grape-shot of Mr. Anstey's "Burglar Bill") who oblige at parties or smoking concerts. Their leading poet when I was younger was the versatile Dagonet, who had a humble but terribly effective derivative in the late Mr. Eaton, the author of "The Fireman's Wedding," and their leading humourist was the writer of a book called "T Leaves." Then came "Kissing Cup's Race" (which Mr. Lewis Sydney on the stage and "Q" in literature toiled so manfully to render impossible), and now I have

no notion what the favourite recitations are, for I have heard none for a long time.

But from those old days when escape was more difficult comes the memory of the worst and the best that I ever heard. The worst was "Papa's Letter," a popular poem of sickly and irresistible sentimentality, which used to call out the handkerchiefs in battalions. The nominal narrator is a young widow whose golden-haired boy wishes to join her in writing a letter to his father. This was at a time before Sir Oliver Lodge had established wireless telephony between heaven and earth. Since the child cannot write she turns him into a letter himself by fancifully sticking a stamp on his forehead. He then (as I remember it) runs out to play, is knocked down by a runaway horse, and—

"Papa's letter is with God."

Who wrote this saccharine tragedy I cannot say, but I once found the name of W. S. Gilbert against it on a programme. Could he possibly have been the author? The psychology of humour is so curious. . . .

So much for the worst recitations. The best that I can recall I heard twenty-five years ago, and have only just succeeded in tracking to print. It was recited at a Bohemian gathering of which I made one in a Fleet Street tavern,

the reciter being a huge Scottish painter with a Falstaffian head. His face was red and truculently jovial, his hair and beard were white and vigorous. I had never seen him before, nor did I see him after; but I can see him now, through much tobacco smoke, and hear him too. Called upon to oblige the company, this giant unfolded himself and said he would give us James Boswell's real opinion of Dr. Johnson. A thrill of expectation ran through the room, for it appeared that the artist was famous for this effort. For me, who knew nothing, the title was good enough. With profundities of humour, such as it is almost necessary to cross the border to find, he performed the piece; sitting tipsily on the side of an imaginary bed as he did so. Every word told, and at the end the greatness of the Great Cham was a myth. For years I tried to find this poem; but no one could tell me anything about it. Here and there was a man who had heard it, but as to authorship he knew nothing. The Scotsman was no more, I discovered. Then last year appeared one who actually knew the author's name: Godfrey Turner, a famous Fleet Street figure in the 'sixties and 'seventies, and in time I met his son, and through him was piloted to certain humorous anthologies, in one of which, H. S. Leigh's "Jeux d'Esprit," I found the poem. Like many of the

best recitations, it does not read famously in cold blood, but as delivered by my Scottish painter it carried big guns. Here it is; but there seems to be an error in the beginning of the third stanza, unless Bozzy's muzziness is being indicated:—

"Bid the ruddy nectar flow!"
I say, old fellow, don't you go.
You know me—Boswell—and you know
I wrote a life of Johnson.

Punch they've here, a splendid brew;
Let's order up a bowl for two,
And then I'll tell you something new
Concerning Doctor Johnson.

A great man that, and no mistake,
To ev'ry subject wide awake;
A toughish job you'd have, to make
A fool of Doctor Johnson;
But everybody worth a straw
Has got some little kind of flaw
(My own's a tendency to jaw
About my poor friend Johnson).

And even that immortal man,
When he to speechify began,
No greater nuisance could be than
The late lamented Johnson.
Enough he was to drive you mad,
Such endless length of tongue he had,
Which caused in me a habit bad
Of cursing Doctor Johnson.

On Recitations

We once were at the famous "Gate"
In Clerkenwell; 'twas getting late;
Between ourselves I ought to state
That Doctor Samuel Johnson
Had stowed away six pints of port,
The strong, full-bodied, fruity sort,
And I had had my whack—in short
As much as Doctor Johnson.

Just as I'd made a brilliant joke
The doctor gave a grunt and woke;
He looked all round, and then he spoke
These words, did Doctor Johnson:
"The man who'd make a pun," said he,
"Would perpetrate a larceny,
And punished equally should be,
Or my name isn't Johnson!"

I on the instant did reply
To that old humbug (by the bye,
You'll understand, of course, that I
Refer to Doctor Johnson),
"You've made the same remark before.
It's perfect bosh; and, what is more,
I look on you, sir, as a bore!"
Says I to Doctor Johnson.

My much-respected friend, alas!
Was only flesh, and flesh is grass.
At certain times the greatest ass
Alive was Doctor Johnson.
I shan't go home until I choose,
Let's all lie down and take a snooze.
I always sleep best in my shoes,
All right! I'm—Doctor Johnson.

Good as that piece was as done by the Scotch artist, I should not care to hear it again. Nor, indeed, do I want to hear any recitation again, unless it is given in mimicry of some one else. Under those conditions I could listen to anything. so powerful is the attraction of the mimic's art. Possibly part of this fascination may be due to one's own inability to imitate too; be that as it may, no mimic who is at all capable ever bores me, and all fill me with wonder. Of course I am conscious that many of the imitators who throng the stage are nothing but pickpockets: too lazy and too mean to acquire novelties of their own, they annex snatches of the best songs of the moment under the plea of burlesquing the original singers. But even so, I often find myself immorally glad that they figure in the programme.

Not the least remarkable thing about good mimics is their capacity not only to reproduce the tones of a voice but the actual style of conversation. I remember hearing someone thus qualified giving a spontaneous impression of a famous scholar whom he had just met, and the curious part of it was that the imitator, though a man of little education, for the moment, under the influence of the concentration which possessed him, employed words proper to his victim which I am certain he had no knowledge of in

cold blood and had never used before. It was almost as if, for a brief interval, the mimic was the scholar, though always with the drop of ridicule or mischief added. It would be interesting to know if, when anyone is being impersonated as intensely as this, any virtue departs from him —whether he is, for the moment, by so much the less himself.

CLICQUOT WELL WON

MY hostess and her daughter met me at the station in the little pony-cart and we set off at a gentle trot, conversing as we went. That is to say, they asked questions about London and the great wicked world, and I endeavoured to answer them.

It was high if premature summer; the sky was blue, the hedges and the grass were growing almost audibly, the birds sang, the sun blazed, and, to lighten the burden, I walked up two or three hills without the faintest enthusiasm.

Just after the top of the last hill, when I had again resumed my seat (at the risk once more of lifting the pony into the zenith), the ladies simultaneously uttered a shrill cry of dismay.

"Look!" they exclaimed; "there's Bunty!"

I looked, and beheld in the road before us a small West Highland terrier, as white as a recent ratting foray in a wet ditch would allow.

"Bunty! Bunty! you wicked dog!" they cried; "how dare you go hunting?"

To this question Bunty made no other reply than to subside under the hedge, where a little

shade was to be had, in an attitude of exhaustion tempered by wariness.

"How very naughty!" said my hostess. "I left her in the house."

"Yes," said the daughter, "and if she's going to go off hunting like this what on earth shall we do? There'll be complaints from every one. She's never done it before."

"Come, Bunty!" said my hostess, in the wheedling tones of dog-owners whose dogs notoriously obey their slightest word. But Bunty sat tight.

"If we drive on perhaps she'll follow," said the daughter, and we drove on a few yards; but Bunty did not move.

We stopped again, while coaxing noises were made, calculated to soften the hearts of rocks; but Bunty refused to stir.

"She'll come on later," I suggested.

"Oh, no," said her elderly mistress, "we couldn't risk leaving her here, when she's never gone off alone before. Bunty! Bunty! don't be so naughty. Come along, there's a dear little Bunty."

But Bunty merely glittered at us through her white-hair entanglement and remained perfectly still.

Strange dogs are not much in my line; but since my hostess was no longer very active, and

the daughter was driving, and no one else was present, there seemed to be a certain inevitableness about the proposition which I then made that I should get out and bring the miscreant in.

"Oh, would you mind?" my hostess said. "She won't bite, I promise you. She's a perfect dear."

Trying hard to forget how painful to legs or hands can be the smart closing of the snappy jaws of dogs that won't bite, I advanced stealthily towards Bunty, murmuring ingratiating words.

When I was quite close she turned over on her back, lifted her paws, and obviously commended her soul to Heaven; and I had therefore no difficulty in lifting her up and carrying her to the trap.

Her mistresses received her with rapture, disguised, but by no means successfully, by reproach and reproof, and we were beginning to drive on again when an excited voice called upon us to stop, and a strange lady, of the formidable unmarried kind, with a very red face beneath a purple parasol, confronted us.

"What," she panted, "is the meaning of this outrage? How dare you steal my dog?"

"Your dog, madam?" I began.

"It's no use denying it," she burst in, "I saw you do it. I saw you pick it up and carry it to

the trap. It's—it's monstrous. I shall go to the police about it."

Meanwhile, it cannot be denied, the dog was showing signs of delight and recognition such as had previously been lacking.

"But——" began my hostess, who is anything but quarrelsome.

"We ought to know our own dog when we see it," said the daughter, who does not disdain a fight.

"Certainly," said the angry lady, "if you *have* a dog of your own."

"Of course we have," said the daughter; "we have a West Highland named Bunty."

"This happens to be my West Highland, named Wendy," said the lady, "as you will see if you look on the collar. My name is there too —Miss Morrison, 14 Park Terrace, W. I am staying at Well House Farm."

And it was so.

It was on the tip of my tongue to point out that collars, being easily exchangeable, are not evidence; but I thought it better that any such suggestion should come from elsewhere.

"It is certainly very curious," said the daughter, submitting the features of the dog to the minutest scrutiny; "if it is not Bunty it is her absolute double."

"It is not Bunty, but Wendy," said Miss

Morrison coldly; "and I shall be glad if you will give her to me."

"But——" the daughter began.

"Yes, give the lady the dog," said the mother.

In the regrettable absence of Solomon, who would, of course, have cut the little devil in two, there was nothing for it but to surrender; and the couple went off together, the dog exhibiting every sign of pleasure.

Meanwhile the daughter whipped up the pony, and we soon entered the gates.

In the drive, awaiting us, was a West Highland terrier named Bunty.

"There!" cried the ladies, as they scrambled out and flung themselves on her.

"Of course she's not a bit like that Wendy thing really," said the mother.

"Now that I come to look at her I can see heaps of difference," said the daughter.

"None the less," I interjected, "you turned a very honest man into a thief, and a dog-thief at that; and he insists on reparation."

"Yes, indeed," said the mother, "it is really too bad. What reparation can we make?"

I don't pretend that my feelings are completely soothed, but the Clicquot 1904 which took the place of claret at dinner that evening was certainly very good.

LAURA DANCES TO HER MOTHER'S MUSIC

See "The Innocent's Progress"—Plate 10

THE SUFFERER

HAVING engaged a sleeping-berth I naturally hurried, coin in hand, to the conductor, as all wise travellers do (usually to their discomfiture) to see if I could be accommodated with a compartment to myself and be guaranteed against invasion.

I couldn't.

I then sought my compartment, to learn the worst as to my position, whether above or below the necessarily offensive person who was to be my companion.

He was already there, and we exchanged the hard implacable glare that is reserved among the English for the other fellow in a wagon-lit.

When I discovered that to him had fallen the dreaded upper berth I relaxed a little, and later we were full of courtesies to each other—renunciations of hatpegs, racks, and so forth, and charming mutual concessions as to the light, which I controlled from below—so that by morning we were so friendly that he deemed me a fit recipient of his Great Paris Grievance.

This grievance, which he considered that every one should know about, bore upon the prevalence of spurious coins in the so-called Gay

City and the tendency of Parisians to work them off on foreigners. As he said, a more inhospitable course one cannot conceive. Foreigners in Paris should be treated as guests, the English especially. But it is the English who are the first victims of the possessor of francs that are out of date, five-franc pieces guiltless of their country's silver, and ten-franc pieces into whose composition no gold has entered.

He had been in Paris but an hour or so when —but let me tell the story as my travelling companion told it to me.

"I don't know what your experience in Paris has been," he said, "but I have been victimised right and left."

He was now getting up, while I lay at comparative ease in my berth and watched his difficulties in the congested room and disliked his under vest.

"I had been in Paris but a few hours," he continued, "when it was necessary to pay a cabman. I handed him a franc. He examined it, laughed and returned it. I handed him another. He went through the same performance. Having found some good money to get rid of him, I sat down outside a café to try and remember where I had received the change in which these useless coins had been inserted. During a week in Paris much of my time was spent in that way."

He sighed and drew on his trousers. His braces were red.

"I showed the bad francs to a waiter," he went on, "and he, like the cabman, laughed. In fact, next to nudity, there is no theme so certain to provoke Parisian mirth as a bad coin. The first thought of every one to whom I showed my collection was to be amused." His face blackened with rage. "This cheerful callousness in a matter involving a total want of principle and straight-dealing as between man and man," he said, "denotes to what a point of cynicism the Parisians have attained."

I agreed with him.

"The waiter," he continued, "went through my money and pointed out what was good and what either bad or out of currency. He called other waiters to enjoy the joke. It seemed that in about four hours I had acquired three bad francs, one bad two-franc piece and two bad five-franc pieces. I put them away in another pocket and got fresh change from him, which, as I subsequently discovered, contained one obsolete five-franc piece and two discredited francs. And so it went on. I was a continual target for them."

Here he began to wash, and the story was interrupted.

When he re-emerged I asked him why he didn't always examine his change.

"It's very difficult to remember to do so," he said, "and, besides, I am not an expert. Anyway, it got worse and worse, and when a bad gold piece came along I realised that I must do something; so I wrote to the Chief of the Police."

"In French?" I asked.

"No, in English—the language of honesty. I told him my own experiences. I said that other English people whom I had met had testified to similar trouble; and I put it to him that as a matter of civic pride—*esprit de pays*—he should do his utmost to cleanse Paris of this evil. I added that in my opinion the waiters were the worst offenders."

"Have you had a reply?" I asked.

"Not yet," he said, and having completed his toilet he made room for me.

Later, meeting him in the restaurant-car, I asked him to show me his store of bad money. I wanted to see for myself what these coins were like.

"I haven't got them," he said.

"You sent them to the Chief of the Police with your letter, I suppose?" I said.

"No, I didn't," he replied. "The fact is—well—as a matter of fact I managed to work them all off again."

A SOUTH SEA BUBBLE

"I WANT you," said my hostess, "to take in Mrs. Blank. She is charming. All through the War she has been with her husband in the South Seas. London is a new place to her."

Mrs. Blank did not look too promising. She was pretty in her way—"elegant" an American would have called her—but she lacked animation. However, the South Seas . . . ! Any one fresh from the Pacific must have enough to tell to see soup, fish, and *entrée* safely through.

I began by remarking that she must find London a very complete change after the sun and serenity that she had come from.

"It's certainly noisier," she said; "but we had our share of rain."

"I thought it was always fine there," I remarked; but she laughed a denial and relapsed into silence.

She was one of those women who don't take soup, and this made the economy of her utterances the more unfair.

Racking my brain for a new start, I fell back on those useful fellows, the authors. Presuming that any one who had lived in that fascinating

region—the promised land of so many of us who are weary of English climatic treacheries—would be familiar with the literature of it, I went boldy to work.

"The first book about the South Seas that I ever read," I said, "was Ballantyne's 'Coral Island'."

"Indeed!" she replied.

I asked her if she too had not been brought up on Ballantyne, and she said no. She did not even know his name.

"He wrote for boys," I explained, rather lamely.

"I read poetry chiefly as a girl," she said.

"But surely you know Stevenson's 'Island Nights' Entertainments'?" I said.

No, she did not. Was it nice?

"It's extraordinary," I said. "It gives you more of the atmosphere of the South Seas than any other work. And Louis Becke—you must have read him?" I continued.

No, she had not. She read very little. The last book she had read was on spiritualism.

"Not even Conrad?" I pursued. "No one has so described the calms and storms of the Pacific."

No, she remembered no story called Conrad.

I was about the explain that Conrad was the writer, not the written; but it seemed a waste

of words, and we fell into a stillness broken only by the sound of knife and fork.

"I wonder," I ventured next, "if you came across anyone who had met Ganguin."

"Go—what?" she asked.

"That amazing Peruvian-Frenchman," I went on, with a certain foolish desperation. "Ganguin. He Lived in Tahiti."

"How comically geographical you are!" was all she replied, and again a silence brooded over our plates.

"Hang it! you shall talk," I said to myself; and then aloud, "Tell me all about copra. I have longed to know what copra is; how it grows, what it looks like, what it is for."

"You have come to the wrong person," she replied, with very wide eyes. "I never heard of it. Or did you say 'cobra'? Of course I know what a cobra is—it's a snake. I've seen them at the Zoo."

I put her right. "Copra, the stuff that the traders in the South Seas deal in."

"I never heard of it," she said, "but then why should I? I know nothing about the South Seas."

My stock fell thirty points and I crumbled bread nervously, hoping for something sensible to say; but at this moment "half-time" mercifully set in. My partner on the other side

turned to me suavely and asked if I thought the verses in "Abraham Lincoln" were a beauty or a blemish; and with the assistance of the Russian ballet, some new novels, and the universal unrest I sailed serenely into port. She was as easy and agreeable a woman as that other was difficult, and before she left for the drawing-room she had invited me to lunch and I had accepted.

As I said good night to my hostess I asked why she had told me that my first partner had been in the South Seas. She said that she had said nothing of the sort; what she had said was that during the War she had been stationed with her husband, Colonel Blank, at Southsea.

ON FINDING THINGS

AFTER the passage of several years since I had picked up anything, last week I found successively a carriage key (in Royal Hospital Road), a brooch (in Church Street, Kensington), and sixpence in a third-class compartment. It was as I stooped to pick up the sixpence, which had suddenly gleamed at me under the seat of the now empty carriage, that I said to myself that finding things is one of the purest of earthly joys.

And how rare!

I have, in a lifetime that now and then appals me by its length, found almost nothing. These three things this week; a brown-paper packet when I was about seven, containing eight pennies and one halfpenny; on the grass in the New Forest, when I was about twenty, a half-dollar piece; and at Brighton, not long after, a gold brooch of just sufficient value to make it decent to take it to the police station, from which, a year later, no one having claimed it, it was returned to me: these constitute nearly half a century's haul. I might add—now and

then, perhaps, a safety-pin, pencil, some other trifle, which, however well supplied with such articles one may be, cannot be acquired from a clear sky without a thrill. Even Mr. Rockefeller, I take it, would not have been unmoved had he, instead of myself, stumbled on that treasure between Stony Cross and Boldrewood.

To be given such things is not a comparable experience. With a gift—intention, consciousness, preparation, come in; to say nothing of obligation later. The event is also complicated (and therefore shorn of its glory) by the second person, since the gift must be given. But, suddenly dropping one's eyes, to be aware of a coin—that is sheer rapture. Other things can be exciting too, but a coin is best, because a coin is rarely identifiable by a previous owner; and I am naturally confining myself to those things the ownership of which could not possibly be traced. To find things which have to be surrendered is as impure a joy as the world contains, and no theme for this pen.

The special quality of the act of finding something, with its consequent exhilaration, is half unexpectedness and half separateness. There being no warning, and the article coming to you by chance, no one is to be thanked, no one to be owed anything. In short, you have achieved the greatest human triumph—you have

got something for nothing. That is the true idea: the "nothing" must be absolute; one must never have looked, never have had any finding intention, or even hope. To look for things is to change the whole theory—to rob it of its divine suddenness; to become anxious, even avaricious; to partake of the nature of the rag-picker, the *chiffonier,* or those strange men that one notices walking, with bent heads, along the shore after a storm. (None the less that was a great moment, once, in the island of Coll, when after two hours' systematic searching I found the plover's nest.)

Finding things is at once so rare and pure a joy that to trifle with it is peculiarly heartless. Yet are there people so wantonly in need of sport as to do so. Every one knows of the purse laid on the path or pavement beside a fence, which, as the excited passer-by stoops to pick it up, is twitched through the palings by its adherent string. There is also the coin attached to a thread which can be dropped in the street and instantly pulled up again, setting every eye at a pavement scrutiny. Could there be lower tricks? I fear so, because some years ago, in the great days of a rendezvous of Bohemians in the Strand known as the Marble Halls, a wicked wag (I have been told) once nailed a bad but plausible sovereign to the floor

and waited events. In the case of the purse and string the butts are few and far between and there is usually only a small audience to rejoice in their discomfiture, but the *dénouement* of the cruel comedy of which acquisitiveness and cunning were the warp and woof at the Marble Halls was only too bitterly public. I am told, such is human resourcefulness in guile, that very few of those who saw the coin and marked it down as their own went for it right away, because had they done so the action might have been noticed and the booty claimed. Instead, the discoverer would look swiftly and stealthily round, and then gradually and with every affectation of nonchalance (which to those in the secret, watching from the corners of their wicked eyes, was so funny as to be an agony) he would get nearer and nearer until he was able at last to place one foot on it.

This accomplished, he would relax into something like real naturalness, and, practically certain of his prey, take things easily for a moment or so. Often, I am told, the poor dupe would, at this point, whistle the latest tune. Even now, however, he dared not abandon subterfuge, or his prize, were he seen to pick it up, might have to be surrendered or shared; so the next move was to drop his handkerchief, the idea being to pick up both it and the

sovereign together. Such explosions of laughter as followed upon his failure to do so can (I am informed) rarely have been heard.

—Such was the conspiracy of the nailed sovereign, which, now and then, the victim, shaking the chagrin from him, would without shame himself join, and become a delighted spectator of his successor's humiliation.

Can you conceive of a more impish hoax? But I should like to have witnessed it.

PUNCTUALITY

AMONG my good resolutions for the New Year I very nearly included the determination never to be punctual again. I held my hand, just in time; but it was a near thing.

For a long while it had been, with me, a point of honour to be on time, and, possibly, I had become a little self-righteous on the matter, rebuking too caustically those with a laxer standard. But towards the close of 1919 doubts began to creep in. For one thing, modern conditions were making it very hard to keep engagements to the letter; taxis were scarce and trains and omnibuses crowded, so that in order to be punctual one had to walk and thus lose many precious minutes; for another, I had such a number of appointments which were not kept by the other parties that I had to take the matter into serious consideration, for they all meant disorganisation of a rather exacting time-table at a period when I was unusually busy. Moreover, while waiting for a late friend, it is impossible to do anything—one is too impatient or unsettled.

Why, I began to ask myself, should I do

all the waiting and get hungry and cross, and why should they do all the arriving-when-everything-is-ready? Why should not the rôles be reversed?

When conscription came in and martial habits became the rule, I had hoped and believed that punctuality was really likely to be established. I thought this because one had always heard so much about Army precision, and also because my most punctual friend for many years had been a soldier and we had engaged in a rivalry in the matter. But I was wrong. During the War the soldiers home on leave took every advantage of one's gratitude to them, while the first demobilised one whom I entertained kept me waiting forty minutes for dinner.

The pity of it is that this particular tarrying guest is a man of eminence and capacity. Were he a failure, as according to our own Samuel Smiles or the author of that famous American book "From Princeton College to Colonel House," he ought to be, all would be well; but he is not; he has never been punctual in his life and he has had an exceptionally successful career. The books tell us that the unpunctual man is disqualified in the race for fortune; that no one will employ him, no one will trust him. They say that the keeping of appointments is a test both of character and quality. Business

men interviewing applicants for posts, they tell us, will engage no one, no matter what his attainments, who does not arrive promptly. But these hard and fast schemes of appraisement can, as I have shown, be all wrong. Wisdom, after all, is an element in business success; and what wise man would ever be punctual at his dentist's? What kind of respect a dentist has for his first appointment of the day, I cannot tell. I have avoided these early séances; but every one knows that he is never ready for a patient at the covenanted hour after that. Editors usually keep their visitors waiting. No theatrical manager has ever been on time; but then time does not exist for the stage, because, apart from their profession, actors have nothing to do. Rehearsals are one immense distracting outrage upon the routine of an ordered existence; and yet actors are a very happy folk.

Until late in 1919, as I have said, I had loved Punctualia with a true ardour; but I now found myself sufficiently free from passion to be able to examine her critically and to discern faults. For there is a good deal to be said against her.

To be always correct is a dangerous thing. I have noticed that the people who are late are often so much jollier than the people who have to wait for them. Looking deeply into the

matter, I realised that Punctualia, for all her complacency and air of rectitude, has lost a great many lives. The logic of the thing is inexorable. If you are late for the train, you miss it; and if you are not in it and it is wrecked, you live on—to miss others. I recalled one very remarkable case in point which happened in my own family circle. A relation of mine, with her daughter, had arranged to spend a holiday in the Channel Islands. A cabman promised and failed, arriving in time only to whip his horse all the way across London and miss the train by a minute. When, the next day, it was learned that the Channel Islands boat had struck the Casquettes and had gone down the ladies were so excited by their escape that they sought the cabman and by way of gratitude adopted one of his numerous children. That is a true story, and it is surely a very eloquent supporter of an anti-punctual policy. Had the ladies caught the train they would have been drowned, and the cabman's bantling would have lacked any but the most elementary education.

Can you wonder, then, that I nearly included a determination never to be punctual again among my New Year resolutions? But I did not go so far. I left it at the decision not to be so particular about punctuality as I used to be.

THE OTHER TWO

IT is my good or ill fortune to have taken a furnished flat at a dizzy altitude in the neighbourhood of that London terminus which is at once nearest the sea and the Promised Land. Immediately above the flat is a spacious roof, which affords a pleasant retreat in the cool of the evening and commands what the agents call an extensive prospect, and where, at most hours, toy dogs may be met. The flat itself consists of a number of rooms the walls of which are covered with photographs of men, women, and children, almost as thickly as the pages of a schoolboy's album are covered with stamps. There are more men than women, and more women than children. The men have obsolete beards; several of the women seem to be sisters, and have been taken together with their heads inclining towards each other at an affectionate angle, which, although affectionate, does not render the thought impossible that each sister secretly is convinced that she is the handsomer. There are also sets of children graduated like organ pipes. These photographs

not only hang on the walls but they swarm in frames about the mantelpieces and the occasional tables. The occasional tables are so numerous and varied in size that one might imagine this their stud farm.

The beginning of my tenancy was marked by a tragedy. The larder window having been left open by the previous occupants, a large slate-coloured pigeon, with schemes for a family, had made a nest and laid an egg in it, and, at the very moment when I suddenly opened the door, was preparing to lay another. To this achievement I personally should have had no objection; but the porter, who was showing me round, and who has a sense of decorum more proper to such apartments, had other views, and before I could interfere he had removed the egg, brushed away the nest, and closed the window. That ended his share of the drama; but mine was to begin, for ever since that day the pigeon, with a depth of reproachfulness in its eyes that is extremely distressing, has sat on the kitchen window-sill making desperate efforts to get in, so that I creep about feeling like Herod. During Baby Week it was almost unbearable. Even when I am far from the kitchen I can hear its plaintive injured cooing.

The flat is conspicuous in possessing, in addition to numerous other advantages, such as a

night porter to work the lift, who is never visible, and a day porter who, having been forbidden by the powers that be to use the lift before two o'clock in the afternoon, scrupulously obeys the new regulation, except when he has to ascend to an upper floor himself: the flat has, in addition to these advantages, windows that refuse to be lifted by any but a Hercules, and doors (ten in all) not one of which will remain open except by artificial means. Whether or not this is a peculiarity of Westminster architecture I cannot say, but all the doors are alike. They each quickly but remorselessly close, yet so gently that the latch does not catch, and every breath of draught (and we by no means stop at breaths) sways them noisily to and fro with a sound that is excessively irritating to the nerves. I have therefore either to go to the door and fasten it or find something with which to fix it open. Normally, I use a chair or a weight from the kitchen scales; but two of the rooms—the drawing-room, where the occasional tables are most fecund, and the dining-room, where I do everything but dine—are supplied with door-stops of their own, consisting each of an elephant's foot mounted with brass. Picture me then, the most Occidental of men and so long a devotee of the study and the shelf as to be less of a big-game hunter than

any one you could imagine, moving about this intensely sophisticated flat carrying from room to room the foot of a mammoth of the Indian jungle or the African forest (I don't know which) in order to prevent a London door from banging. Imperial Cæsar's destiny was not less exalted or more incongruous.

If there were four of these feet I should be more at ease. But there are only two of them, and I have been to the Zoo often enough to know that elephants are quadrupeds. Where then are the other two? That is the question which is wearing me out. I lie awake at night, wondering, and then, falling into an uneasy sleep, hear a heavy stumbling tread on the stairs and wake in terror expecting the door to burst open and the other half of the elephant to advance upon me demanding its lost feet. It is always a dreadful nightmare, but never more so than when the mammoth not only towers up grey and threatening, but coos like an exiled pigeon.

ON SECRET PASSAGES

I WAS hearing the other day of an old house in Sussex where, while doing some repairs, the builders' men chanced on the mouth of an underground passage which they traced for two miles. Why should that discovery be interesting? Why is everything to do with underground passages so interesting? It is, I suppose, because they are usually secret, and the very word secret, no matter how applied (except perhaps to treaties) is alluring: secret drawers, secret cupboards, secret chambers; but the secret passage is best, because it leads from one place to another, and either war or love called it into being: war or love, or, as in the case of priests' hiding holes, religious persecution, which is a branch of war.

Nothing can deprive the secret passage of its glamour: not all the Tubes, or subways, or river tunnelling, through which we pass so naturally day after day. Any private excavation is exciting; to enter a dark cellar, even, carries a certain emotion. How mysterious are crypts! How awesome are the catacombs of Rome! How it brings back the lawless, turbulent past of Florence merely to walk through

that long passage (not underground but overground, yet no less dramatic for that) which, passing above the Ponte Vecchio, unites the Pitti and the Uffizi and made it possible, unseen by the Florentines, to transfer bodies of armed men from one side of the Arno to the other!

It was the underground passage idea which gave the Druce Case such possibilities of mystery and romance. That a duke should masquerade as an upholsterer was in itself an engaging idea; but without the underground passage connecting Baker Street with Cavendish Square the story was no more than an ordinary feuilleton. I shall always regret that it was not true; and even now some one ought to take it in hand and make a real romance of it, with the double-lived nobleman leaving his own home so regularly every morning (by the trap door), doffing his coronet and robes and changing *en route* somewhere under Wigmore Street, and appearing unseen (by another trap door) in the Bazaar, all smug and punctual and rubbing his hands. It would be not only thrilling, but such a satire on ducal dulness. And then the great Law Court scenes, the rival heirs, the impassioned counsel, the vast sums at stake, the sanction of the judge to open the grave, and finally the discovery that there was no body there after all—nothing but bricks—and the fantastic story

really was fact! There has been no better plot since "Monte Cristo," and that, you remember, would be nothing had not the Abbé Faria excavated the secret passage from his cell through which Edmond was able to re-enter the world and start upon his career of symmetrical vengeance.

What, of course, gave such likelihood to the Druce allegations was the circumstance that the Duke of Portland spent so much of his life at Welbeck underground. A man who is known to do that must expect to be the subject of romantic exaggerations.

Another reason for wishing the Druce story to be true is that, if it were true, if one aristocrat thus duplicated and enriched his life, others also would do so; for there are no single instances; and this means that London would be honey-combed by secret underground passages constructed to promote these entertaining deceptions, and shopping would become an absorbing pastime, for we should never know with whom we were chaffering. But alas . . .!

Just as an ordinary desk takes on a new character directly one is told that it has a secret drawer, so does even a whisper of a secret passage transfigure the most commonplace house. Arriving in Gloucester not so very long ago, and needing a resting-place for the night, I

automatically chose the hotel which claimed, in the advertisement, to date from the fourteenth century and possess an underground passage to the cathedral. The fact that, as the young lady in the office assured me, the passage, if it ever existed, no longer is accessible, made very little difference: the idea of it was the attraction and determined the choice of the inn. The Y. M. C. A. headquarters at Brighton on the Old Steyne ceases to be under the dominion of those initials—four letters which, for all their earnest of usefulness, are as far removed from the suggestion of clandestine intrigue as any could be—and becomes a totally different structure when one is told that when, long before its conversion, Mrs. Fitzherbert lived there, an underground passage existed between it and the Pavilion for the use of the First Gentleman in Europe. Whether it is fact or fancy I cannot say, but that the Pavilion has a hidden staircase and an underground passage to the Dome I happen to know. A hidden staircase has hardly fewer adventurous potentialities than a secret passage. I was told of one at Greenwich Hospital: in the wing built by Charles II. is a secret staircase in the wall leading to the apartments set apart for (need I say?) Mistress Eleanor Gwynne? These rooms, such is the deteriorating effect of modernity, are now offices.

LITTLE MISS BANKS

TO many people wholly free from superstition, except that, after spilling the salt, they are careful to throw a little over the left shoulder, and do not walk under ladders unless with crossed thumbs, and refuse to sit thirteen at table, and never bring May blossoms into the house—to these people, otherwise so free from superstition, it would perhaps be surprising to know what great numbers of their fellow-creatures resort daily to such a black art as fortune-telling by the cards.

Yet quite respectable, God-fearing, church-going old ladies, and probably old gentlemen too, treasure this practice, to say nothing of younger and therefore naturally more frivolous folk; and many make the consultation of the two-and-fifty oracles a morning habit.

Particularly women. Those well-thumbed packs of cards that we know so well are not wholly dedicated to "Patience," I can assure you.

All want to be told the same thing: what the day will bring forth. But each searcher

into the dim and dangerous future has, of course, individual methods—some shuffling seven times and some ten, and so forth, and all intent upon placating the elfish goddess, Caprice.

There is little Miss Banks, for example.

Nothing would induce little Miss Banks to leave the house in the morning without seeing what the cards promised her, and so open and impressionable are her mind and heart that she is still interested in the colour of the romantic fellow whom the day, if kind, is to fling across her path. The cards, as you know, are great on colours, all men being divided into three groups; dark (which has the preference), fair, and middling. Similarly for you, if you can get little Miss Banks to read your fate (but you must of course shuffle the pack yourself), there are but three kinds of charmers: dark (again the most fascinating and to be desired), fair, and middling.

It is great fun to watch little Miss Banks at her necromancy. She takes it so earnestly, literally wrenching the future's secrets from their lair.

"A letter is coming to you from some one," she says. "An important letter."

And again, "I see a voyage over water."

Or very seriously, "There's a death."

You gasp.

"No, it's not yours. A fair woman's."

You laugh. "Only a fair woman's!" you say. "Go on."

But the cards have not only ambiguities, but strange reticences.

"Oh," little Miss Banks will say, her eyes large with excitement, "there's a payment of money and a dark man."

"Good," you say.

"But I can't tell," she goes on, "whether you pay it to him or he pays it to you."

"That's a nice state of things," you say, becoming indignant. "Surely you can tell."

"No, I can't."

You begin to go over your dark acquaintances who might owe you money, and can think of none.

You then think of your dark acquaintances to whom you owe money and are horrified by their number.

"Oh, well," you say, "the whole thing's rubbish, anyway."

Little Miss Banks's eyes dilate with pained astonishment. "Rubbish!"—and she begins to shuffle again.

GENTLEMEN BOTH

NOT all of us have the best manners always about us. The fortunate are they whose reaction is instant; but those also are fortunate who, after the first failure—during the conflict between, say, natural and acquired feelings—can recapture their best, too.

At a certain country house where a shooting party was assembled a picture stood on an easel in a corner of the dining-room. It was a noticeable picture by reason of its beauty and also by reason of a gash in the canvas. Coffee was on the table when one of the guests, looking round the walls, observed it for the first time, and, drawing his host's attention to its excellence, asked who was the painter; and the host, who was an impulsive, hearty fellow, full of money, after supplying the information and corroborating the justice of the criticism, remarked to the whole company, "Now here's a sporting offer. You see that cut across the paint in the middle"—pointing it out as he spoke—"well, I'll give any one a thousand pounds who can guess how it was done."

They all rose and clustered before the easel; for a thousand pounds are worth having a try for, even when one is rich—as most of them were.

"It was done only last week," the host continued, "and it was such a queer business that I don't intend to have it repaired. Now then, all of you, a thousand of the best for the correct answer."

He rubbed his hands and chuckled. It was a sure thing for him, and there would be a lot of fun in the suggestions.

The guests having re-examined the cut with minuteness, one by one, seated themselves again, and pencils and paper were provided so that the various possible solutions might be written down. The real business then began—no sound but pencils writing and the host chuckling.

Now it happened that one of the party, a year or so before, had seen somewhere in Yorkshire a picture with a not dissimilar rent, caused, he had been told, by a panic-stricken bird which had blundered into the room and couldn't get out again. Remembering this, and remembering also that history sometimes repeats itself, he wrote on his piece of paper that, according to his guess, the canvas was torn by a bird which had flown into the room and lost its head.

All the suggestions having been written down, the host called on their writers to read them, a jolly, confident smile lighting up his features, which grew more jolly and more confident as one after another incorrect solution was tendered.

And then came the turn of the man who had remembered about the bird, and who happened to be the last of all. "My guess is," he read out, "that the picture was damaged by a bird."

There was a roar of laughter, which gradually subsided when it was observed that the host was very far from joining in it. In fact, his face not only had lost all its good humour, but was white and tense.

When there was silence he said, with a certain biting shortness: "Somebody must have told you."

"Nobody told me," was the reply. "But you don't really mean to say I've guessed right?"

"If you call it a guess—yes," said the host, whose mortification had become painful to witness.

"Well," said the other quickly and pleasantly, "'guess' perhaps isn't the right word, and, of course, I shouldn't therefore claim the reward. You see——," and he then explained how he had remembered the odd experience in Yorkshire, and in default of any inventiveness of his

own had used it. "So, of course," he added, rising and moving towards the window, "the offer is off. Remembering isn't guessing; quite the reverse. What a gorgeous moon!"

The others also rose, only too willingly, for the situation had become trying; the matter dropped, at any rate as a theme of general conversation; and gradually and uncomfortably bed-time was reached.

Several of the party were at breakfast the next morning when their host made his first appearance; and they noticed that he had regained his customary gay serenity. Walking up to the guest whose memory had been so embarrassing, he handed him a slip of paper.

"I'm sorry, old man," he said, "to have been in such a muddle last night, but the accuracy of that shot of yours dazed me. Of course the offer stands. All this cheque needs is for you to fill in the name of whatever hospital or charity you prefer."

"Thanks," said the other as he put it in his pocket-book.

ON EPITAPHS

NOT long ago I was staying in a village where the shortest cut to the inn lay through the churchyard, and passing and repassing so often I came to know the dead inhabitants of the place almost better than the living. Not with the penetrating knowledge of the author of "Spoon River Anthology"—that very extraordinary and understanding book,—but in a kindly superficial way. Indeed, considering that they were total strangers and their acquaintance not now to be made by any but the followers of those doughty knights of the round (or square) séance table, Sir Oliver and Sir Conan, some of these dead people were absurdly often in my thoughts; but that was because of their names. Such names! Many of course were no longer legible, for Father Time had either obliterated them with his patient finger, dipped now in lichen and now in moss, or upon them his tears had fallen too steadily. But many remained and some of them were wonderful. Has it ever been explained why the dead have more remarkable names than the living? Did any one ever meet "in the form" a Lavender

Wiseways? Yet there was a Lavender Wiseways lying beneath one of those stones. There was her sister too, lying close beside—Lavinia Wiseways. Neither had married; but then how could they have performed a deed which would have lost them such distinction! And who now exchanges market greetings, with a gaitered gentleman named Paradine Ebb? Yet once there was a Paradine Ebb, farmer, not such a great distance from London, to shake by the hand, and chat to, and buy fat stock from, and, I hope, share a cordial glass with. And who—but if I continue I shall betray the village's name, and that is against good manners. Too many real names get into print in these inquisitive days.

It was not however of strange dead names that I was thinking when I took up my pen, but of the epitaphs on the tombstones, sometimes so brief and simple, sometimes so long and pompous, and almost always withholding everything of real importance about the occupants of the narrow cells beneath and almost always affecting to despise the precious gift of life. Why should not some one, greatly daring, go so far as to bid the mason engrave a tribute to the world that is being left behind? Would that be so impious? There is no indication that any of these dead ever enjoyed a moment.

On Epitaphs

Something like this, for instance—

HERE LIES
HENRY ROBINSON
WHO LIVED IN THE BELIEF—AND, WITH MANY FAILURES, DID HIS BEST TO ACT OF TO IT—THAT IF YOU SPEND YOUR TIME IN TRYING TO MAKE THINGS A LITTLE EASIER AND MERRIER IN THIS WORLD, THE NEXT CAN TAKE CARE OF ITSELF.

The whole insincere suggestion of most churchyards now is that life has been spent in a vale of tears: a long tribulation, merely a preparation for another and better world. But we know that that is not usually the case, and we know that many lives, although unrelated to graveyard ideas of decorum and insurance, are happier than not. There is in the God's Acre of which I am writing more than one appeal to the living to be wary of earthly serenity: surely a very unfair line for the dead to take and not unremindful of the fable of the fox and his tail. An elaborate stone close by the lych gate has a series of dreary couplets warning the passer-by that the next grave to be dug may be his; and on the assumption that he is being too happy he is adjured to a morbid thoughtfulness. The dead might be kinder than that, more gen-

erous, more altruistic! I should like a headstone to bear some such motto as

"Die and Let Live."

But not only do the epitaphs suggest that life below is a snare; they are by no means too encouraging about the life above. The spirit they proclaim is a very poor one. Nothing can make death attractive; but even if some golden-mouthed advocate should arise whose eloquence half persuaded, the churchyard would beat him: the damp of it, the gloom of it, the mouldiness of it, the pathetic unconvincing efforts at resignation which the slabs record! We ought to be braver; more heartening to others. A rector who allowed none but cheerful epitaphs would be worth his tithes.

Would there be any very impossible impropriety in such an inscription as this—

Here Lies

JOHN SMITH

Who found earth pleasant and rejoiced in its beauties and enjoyed its savours; who loved and was loved; and who would fain go on living. He died reluctantly, but wishes well to all who survive him.

Carpe diem.

Reading that, the stranger would not necessarily (I hope) be transformed into a detrimental Hedonist.

And now and then a human foible might be recorded by the stonemason without risk of undermining society's foundations. When our friends are dead why should we not disclose a little? Some secrets are better out. Here for example—

HERE LIES
(in no expectation of immortality)
THOMAS BROWN
HE WAS NO FRIEND OF THE CHURCH, BUT HE PAID HIS WAY, INTERFERRED WITH NONE OF HIS NEIGHBOURS, AND HIS WORD WAS HIS BOND.

What would happen if Thomas Brown's friends paid for such lapidary style as that? Would the world totter? Again—

HERE LIES
MARY JONES
THE WIFE OF WILLIAM JONES.
HONOUR HER MEMORY, FOR SHE WAS LENIENT WHEN HER HUSBAND WAS IN LIQUOR.

I should also like to see memorial verses beginning:

Physicians sore
Long time I bore.

IN AND ABOUT LONDON

IN AND ABOUT LONDON

I

A LONDON THRILL

THE scene was Gerrard Street: a rather curious thoroughfare notable for possessing three or four restaurants dear to Bohemia, the great West End telephone exchange, the homes of Dryden and Edmund Burke, a number of cinema offices, and many foreign inhabitants.

The time was three o'clock in the afternoon.

In the middle were two or three big vans, loading or unloading and filling the roadway, thus cutting the street into two so effectively that I, approaching from the east, had no knowledge of anything happening in the western half. I therefore attached no significance to the hurrying steps of a policeman in front of me, but was a little surprised to see him pick his way almost on tiptoe between the vans—yet not sufficiently surprised to anticipate drama.

But the drama was there, awaiting me, on the other side of the vans, and the policeman—this

being London drama—was naturally one of the performers. For there never was a street play yet—comedy, tragedy, or farce—without a policeman in the cast. It is a convention to say—as every one has in his time said and will say again—that a policeman is never there when he is wanted; but that is true only in the dull sense: what we mean is that the policeman is never there before the curtain rises, or, in other words, in time to prevent the performance altogether. How tame if he were! As a matter of fact, by delaying his arrival until the affair is in good train he takes his proper part as a London entertainer; that is to say, he *is* there when he is wanted—wanted to complete the show.

It was thus on the present occasion.

On passing the vans I was suddenly aware that the curtain had risen; for on the south pavement were some fifteen or twenty people watching two women at the house opposite, one of whom, a young one in a long brown overcoat, was trying to get past the half-opened door, while the other, an older one, in black, repulsed her from within. Just as I arrived the policeman darted from between the vans, seized the young woman's arm, and said, "That's enough of that. You come along with me." Her reluctance was intense, but she did not resist;

in fact, she had about her a suggestion of having expected it.

One of the spectators remarked, "Quite time, too"; another added, "She was arstin' for it." The other woman disappeared into the house, and we all began to move in a westward direction.

Had this young woman, the nature of whose offence I did not learn, been a malefactor of any importance she would have been hustled into a cab and lost to sight. Happily, however, she was only a common brawler or disturber of the peace, and therefore there was no cab. I say happily, because it is rarely that one sees people so cheered up on a dull cold day as every one seemed to be who caught sight of her between Gerrard Street, where the policeman put that deadly grip upon her, and Vine Street, where she vanished into the station. Watching the effect of her impact on the street, "Captured to make a London holiday" is the form of words that ran through my mind.

When we turned from Gerrard Street into Wardour Street we were about thirty strong. When we turned from Wardour Street into Shaftesbury Avenue we were forty-five strong, for as the glad news spread we increased amazingly. It is a point of honour with Londoners to accompany the fallen on their

way. Not to jeer at them, although our absence would be kinder, nor to sympathize with them; merely to be in whatever is going on. If our prevalent expression is one of amusement, that is because we are being entertained, and entertained free. No malice.

And so we proceeded. Every now and then the young woman, who had one of those thin white faces that often mark the excitable and even the not quite sane, and who, I fancy, had been drinking, would have stopped, to enlarge upon her grievance; but the policeman urged her ever onward, always with those terrible official fingers encircling her arm.

The retinue became alarming, like a food queue on the march. Little boys who a moment ago had no hopes of any such luck screamed the tidings to other little boys in the by-ways and these, in their turn, shrieked out to others, so that reinforcements scampered down Rupert Street and Great Windmill Street to swell the concourse. In one little boy I watched horror struggle with joy. "They've pinched a lady!" he exclaimed in shocked tones, and then hurried to the head of the line to miss nothing of the outrage. The people on the tops of motor-buses stood up. At Piccadilly Circus the traffic was suspended.

A pathetic young woman in a long brown over-

coat having tried for just a few moments too long to enter a house in Gerrard Street (to which, for all I know, she had a perfect right), all London was disorganised!

And so she crossed Regent Street, passed the Piccadilly Hotel, and at the alley leading to Vine Street was swallowed up. The most eager of the adults and all the small boys penetrated the alley too, but the rest, with one last longing look, melted away and resumed the ordinary tedium of life. The thrill was over. . . .

But the squalor of that march! What she had done I have no notion, but she was well punished for it long before Vine Street was reached. I hope that magistrates sometimes take these distances into consideration.

II

A DOOR-PLATE

BUT for having lived in London long enough to know the rules, or, in other words, to be aware that nothing is out of place there, I might have thought of the door-plate which, in Fetter Lane, suddenly caught my eye as an incongruity. But no; I am inured, and therefore I merely looked at it twice instead of only once, and passed on with a head full of mental and intensely uncivic pictures of undauntable men, identical in patience and hopefulness, standing hour after hour at the ends of piers all round ours coasts, watching their lines. For the words on the door-plate were these: "British Sea Anglers' Society."

I shall continue to deny that the notice was out of place, but a certain oddity (not uncommon in London) may be conceded, for Fetter Lane otherwise has less marine association than any street that one could name; and angling is too placid, too philosophic, too reclusive a sport to be represented by an office absolutely on the fringe of that half-square mile of the largest city in the world given over to fierce, feverish

activity; where printing presses are at their thickest, busy and clattering, day and night, in the task of providing Britons with all—and a little more—of the news, and a fresh sensation for every breakfast table. Except that upon the breakfast table is often to be found the herring in one or other of its posthumous metamorphoses, there is no connecting link whatever. And why one has to belong to a society with a door-plate in Fetter Lane before drawing mackerel from Pevensey Bay, or whiting from the Solent, is a question to answer which is beside the mark; although that fish can be caught from the sea without membership of this fraternity I myself can testify—for was I not once in the English Channel in a small boat in the company of two conger eels and a dogfish, whose noisy and arobatic reluctance to die turned what ought to have been a party of pleasure into misery and shame; and shall I ever forget the look of dismay (a little touched by triumph) on the face of a humane English girl visiting Ireland, when, after she had pulled in an unresisting pollock at the end of a trawl line and the boatman had taken it from the hook and beaten it sickeningly to death with an iron thole pin, she heard him say, as later, he handed the fish to a colleague on the landing-stage, "The young lady killed it"?

But this is not London—far, indeed, from it!—although an excellent example of London's peculiar and precious gift of starting the mind on extra-mural adventures. The sea, however, is, in reality too, very near the city, and the closeness of London's relations with it can be tested in many delightful ways. Although, for example, the natural meeting-place of those two old cronies, Father Thames and Neptune, is somewhere about Gravesend, Neptune, as a matter of fact, comes for a friendly glass with Gog (I almost wrote Grog) and Magog right up to town. If you lean over the eastern parapet of London Bridge, just under the clock which has letters instead of numerals, you will see the stevedores unloading all kinds of wonderful sea-borne exotic merchandise. The other morning I was the guest of a skipper of one of these vessels, and sat in his cabin (which smelt, authentically, of tobacco smoke as only a cabin can,) with his first engineer, and ate ship's biscuits and heard first-hand stories of the sinking of the *Titanic,* together with details of a romance in the European quarter of a certain African port all ready to the magic hand of Mr. Conrad. Twelve minutes later I was in a club in Pall Mall!

But there is no need to enter a cabin, although that is, of course, the pleasantest way, for if

you wander down to the Tower you can sit on an old cannon on the quay and have the music of cordage in your ears, and if you climb to the top of the Tower Bridge the scene below you has the elements of a thousand yarns. And there are streets near the docks which might have been cut out of Plymouth or Bristol. Now and then, indeed, London may be said to be actually on the sea.

Such excursions are for the hours of light. In the hours of darkness I used to have, years ago, a favourite river-side refuge. In those days, when cabmen asked for custom instead of repulsing it, and public-houses remained open until half-past 12 a. m., I had for fine summer nights, after a dull play or dinner, a diversion that never failed; and this was to make my way —if possible with a stranger to such sights and scenes, and an impressionable one—to the Angel at Rotherhithe and watch the shipping for an hour. The Angel is difficult of access, but once there you might be at Valparaiso. It is a quarter of a mile below the Tower Bridge on the south bank, with a wooden balcony overhanging the water, and a mass of dark creaking barges moored below. Here on the balcony we used to sit, while the great ships stole by at quarter speed, groping for their moorings, and strange lights appeared and disappeared, and voices

hailed each other and were answered, and little sinister rowing boats moved here and there on unknown missions, and perhaps an excursion steamer, back very late from Margate, with its saloon all lighted and a banjo bravely making merry to the bitter end, would glide past towards London Bridge; and such is the enchantment of ships and shipping that not even she could break the spell.

May the Angel survive the deluge! If not, I must carry out the dream of my life, and make friends with the captain of a Thames tug.

III

ANGEL ADVOCACY

FOR more than half a century the humourist gravelled for matter has found the ugliness of the Albert Memorial an easy escape from his difficulties. To mention it is to raise a laugh.

But is it so ugly?

Conceiving that the time was ripe to put my own authentic impressions above hearsay, I have made a pilgrimage to this shrine and subjected it to the most careful examination.

I was amply repaid. Alike when resting on the comfortable seats around its enclosure, taking in the structure as a whole, or when scrutinising its sculptures at close range, I was pleasantly entertained, and I came to the decision that the Albert Memorial not only has more in it to attract than to repel, but is a very remarkable summary of the triumphs of Science and Art: as good a lesson book as bronze and stone could compile.

But even if this judgment is wrong, and the Albert Memorial really deserves the facile execration by you and me which so long has been

its portion, that is not all. The subject is by no means closed. For you and I are not everybody; we are getting old and tired and exacting, and we are more disposed to complain of what we miss than to be happy with what we find. There are, in the world, others whose attitude is simpler than ours, whose views quite possibly are more important, to whose by no means foolish eyes the Albert Memorial is beyond praise—adequate, stimulating, splendid. I mean children.

Sir Gilbert Scott, the designer of the Albert Memorial, knowing, either consciously or subconsciously—but the result is the same—that the principal frequenters of Kensington Gardens are children, behaved accordingly.

Those coloured pinnacles, those queens and angels high up in the sky under the golden cross, those gay mosaics against the blue, fill children with wondering delight. The emblematical groups of statuary—America with its buffalo and Red Indian, Asia with its elephant, Africa with its giant negro—must be thrilling, too; and when it comes to the great men around the base—the musicians (Gluck's head is really masterly), the poets, with Homer between Shakespeare and Milton, the painters, with Turner transformed to elegance, the architects, the sculptors, all so capable and calm and bland,

and all exactly the same height—I am with the children in their admiration.

This mass meeting of the intelligentsia is a reminder of all that is best in literature and art, but most noticeably does it bring back the memory of great buildings—an unusual emphasis being laid upon those commonly anonymous and taken-for-granted masters, the architects. Indeed, such is this emphasis that Giotto and Michael Angelo each comes into the scheme twice, once as painter and again for structural genius.

The Albert Memorial contains all the materials for a pageant; it is, in fact, a pageant crystallised; and if the myriad figures in the frieze and in the groups were one moonlight night released by the magician who turned them to stone and, coming to life, were to march through Kensington Gardens, they would make, not only an impressive sight, as they wound among the trees, with Asia's elephant leading, but as representative a procession of the shining ones of the earth as Mr. Louis Napoleon Parker could invent.

It is my belief that if only a few jackdaws could be persuaded to make their home in its higher crevices, the Albert Memorial would automatically take its place among the worshipful structures and be mocked at no more. For that

is what is needed. Beneath the jackdaw's wing, where so many of our cathedrals repose, sanctity and authority would be conferred upon it. As one looks up to the golden summit, one is conscious of the absence of this discriminating and aloof yet humanizing bird, black against the sky, critical if not actually censorious in his speech, and an unmistakable indication that the building is noteworthy.

IV

THE SOANE HOGARTHS

NO sooner was Sir John Soane's Museum in Lincoln's Inn Fields open again, after its long closure, than I hastened there to renew acquaintance with that remarkable, almost incredible, pictorial document, Hogarth's "Election" series. Modern elections are frequent enough to add piquancy to the comparison, but apart from that it is instructive to see in what spirit our not very remote ancestors approached the ordeal of being returned to Parliament. The world may not have advanced very perceptibly in many directions, but, if Hogarth is trustworthy, only a master of paradox could successfully maintain that no progress is to be noted in the manufacture of legislators.

Not, however, that everything here depicted is obsolete. Far from it. The groundwork is the same, and probably will always be so, but there is now less coarseness. There is also more order, more method. And one has, furthermore, to remember that Hogarth was a synthetic satirist, and a rather wicked wit to boot. He assembled his puppets rather than found them

all together, and it amused him to heighten effects and to score off his pet butts when he could. All these allowances, however, being made, I fancy that the "Election" series has a good deal of old England in it.

The series begins with the entertainment given by the two candidates of the Court Party to their supporters, and even among Hogarth's works this scene is remarkable for the number of things that are occurring at once. No one excelled our English master in this crowding of incident, not even Breughel or Teniers. While one of the candidates is, doubtless for strictly political reasons, permitting himself to be caressed by an old woman, a small girl abstracts his gold ring, and a man singes his wig with a clay pipe. In the street outside the room is a procession of the rival party, throwing through the window half-bricks, one of which is seen to have just smashed a gentleman's head, while another gentleman, injured at a slightly more remote period of the campaign, is being anointed with spirits without, while he consumes spirits within. At the end of the table the mayor of the independent borough, having been reduced by too many oysters and too much liquor to a state of collapse, is being bled by a surgeon. An orchestra, including a left-handed fiddleress and the bagpipes, plays throughout; and a small boy,

in spite of the mayor's condition, continues to mix punch in a mash tub. All this at once!

That was overnight. The next day the canvassing begins, and it is superfluous to state that bribery and corruption are rife. Here, again, is a wealth of synchronous occurrence. On the left are seen two gay ladies persuading one of the candidates to buy trinkets for them from a pedlar. That could hardly be done to-day, at any rate so openly; but another of the incidents is of all time: a conversation between two men, a barber and a cobbler, in which the barber explains how a certain naval engagement was won, symbolising the ships by pieces of a broken clay pipe, very much as tap-room tacticians for many years to come will be reconstructing the battle of Jutland or the retreat from Mons.

Then the polling. Here is more simultaneous confusion. In a panic the agent has collected every possible voter, including the maimed, the blind, and even the idiotic, and they are attesting before the officer, while protests against their validity as voters are being urged by the opposite party's lawyer. The candidates themselves are on the hustings, and in the distance Britannia's coach has broken down!

Finally, we see the Chairing of the Members —one of whom is depicted in the foreground, very insecure on his crazy throne, while the

shadow of the other's approach is visible on a wall. That chairing has gone out should be a source of extraordinary relief at Westminster. Indeed, were it still the custom, many a modern man—and certainly all the fat ones—would decide to seek fame elsewhere than in Parliament. Hogarth's candidate was peculiarly unfortunate in his bearers, one of whom has just been hit on the head by a flail, and another has collided with an old woman who was thrown down by a runaway litter of pigs. Meanwhile, the man with the flail fights a sailor with a cudgel, the cause of the combat being apparently the presence of a performing bear and a monkey; and, overcome by the fracas, a lady faints. Elsewhere, in the inn on the left, the defeated party are consoling themselves with a banquet, a practice that has by no means died out.

Only those who have been through the agonies and excitements of an election can say how far Hogarth has ceased to be a faithful delineator of his fellow-countrymen; but one thing is certain, and that is that time has done nothing to impair the liveliness of his record.

V

GREENWICH HOSPITAL

AFTER being shut for some years—to protect it from certain dissatisfied ladies who in the dim and distant past took it out of pictures if they did not get the vote—the Painted Hall at Greenwich was again opened in 1919, not, I hope, to close its doors to the public any more. All people interested in our naval history and the men who made it must acquire the Greenwich habit (although whitebait and turtle soup are no longer available to sustain them at the adjacent "Ship"), but in particular should the Nelson devotees be happy, for the Painted Hall is rich in portraits of him, portraits of his friends, pictures of scenes in his life, pictures of his death, and personal relics. Indeed this Hall is to Nelson what the Invalides is to Napoleon. Sir John Thornhill (with whose daughter Hogarth ran away) may have covered its walls and its ceiling with Stuarts and allegory —at three pounds the square yard for the ceiling work and one pound for the walls—but it is not of Stuarts and allegory that one thinks, it is of the most fascinating and romantic and sym-

pathetic of British heroes and the greatest of our admirals.

Nelson is brought very near us. Among the personal relics are the very clothes he was wearing when he died on the *Victory*, the codicil to his will, written in his big left-hand characters and witnessed by the friend, Captain Hardy, in whose arms he sank. On a neighbouring wall is Turner's great lurid painting of the *Victory* in action, while elsewhere in the Museum will be found a model of the whole battle, with the *Victory* closely engaged with the *Redoubtable*, from whose mizzen-top the fatal bullet is supposed to have been fired.

There are many other intimate souvenirs; and once there were more, but thieves intervened. From those stolen in a burglary many years ago (the windows have since had bars put to them) the only one to be regained was Nelson's gold watch; and this was found—where do you think? Hidden in a concertina somewhere in Australia. But after those wanderings and vicissitudes it now reposes again in safety in the Painted Hall, for all hero-worshippers to covet.

Complete as the Nelson collection appears to be, one realises, on reflection, that only as a sailor is he celebrated here. We see him in every aspect of his fighting career; we see his friends: sturdy old William Locker, who was a

governor of this Hospital, and others; we see his admirals and captains. But of Emma Hamilton no trace!

The Painted Hall, from Wren's design, was built by William and Mary. The Museum fills several rooms in an adjacent building which was to have been a riverside palace for Charles II. It is notable chiefly for its relics of the other hero of Greenwich Hospital, Sir John Franklin. It is also rich in models of ships, but of models of ships I personally can very quickly have a surfeit; rather would I sit beside the Thames and watch the real vessels go by—the big tramp steamers homing laden from abroad or leaving in ballast for the open sea; the little busy tugs, with their retinue of lighters; and the brown-sailed barges moving swiftly with the stream. The other day there was a merry breeze under a cloudless sky, and the air was filled with the music of the Greenwich symphony, which is played by an orchestra entirely composed of foghorns and hooters.

But Greenwich is amphibious. The river may not be for all tastes; there is the park too, with its avenues climbing to the heights of Blackheath. The deer have gone; but the Observatory remains, for the accurate adjustment of watches, and there is the distant prospect of London of which the great landscape painters

used to be so fond, from the corner of the terrace. It is much the same as when Turner and others limned it, save that to-day the dome of St. Paul's seems to rise from the very middle of the Tower Bridge.

VI

KEW IN APRIL

KEW GARDENS in the old days used to be largely a German paradise, for the Teutons in our midst found them more like their own pleasaunces, although wanting in beer, than any other London resort. But when I was last there, in 1919, I heard no German tones. A few French voices mingled with the thrushes and blackbirds; and a number of American soldiers, not unaccompanied by British beauty, sat on secluded seats. The rest of us were natives, promenading with true national decorum, carefully obeying all the laws concerning birds'-nesting, throwing paper about, smoking, and (in the glass-houses) keeping to the right, without the observance of which scientific botany cannot prosper. And for some reason or other (connected no doubt with the universal advance in the cost of life which has been agreed upon as necessary or salutary) we were all forced to pay a penny for admission.

It annoys me to think that not until the Germans vacated the gardens was this entrance fee charged. To them (as to us for generations)

Kew was free; now that they have disappeared, one of the results of their provocative belligerence is that it is free no longer!

Although early yet both for flower and leaf, the daffodils were already millions strong, and would be stronger; in the rock garden the saxifrage's tender mauve clusters were to be seen, and there was a patch of the lovely *Antennaria Plantagenia* at its best. But the most beautiful object at the moment—and that which I went especially to see—was the Yulan, the Chinese magnolia, *Magnolia conspicua,* in nearly full bloom. Imagine a great tree with black boughs and twigs exquisitely disposed, from which burst ten thousand lilies of a dazzling purity. No buds, no leaves; nothing but these myriad serene white flowers springing from the hard wood. The position of the tree adds to the strangeness and beauty of it, for it is remote from anything formal, between the biggest glass-house and the edge of the arboretum. On Saturday, seen against an indigo thunderbank, it was unearthly in its luminosity.

I have to thank the rain for driving me into the Royal Palace, which, though I have known Kew for so many years, I had never entered before. In this pleasant mansion, red brick without and white panelling within, and smaller than would satisfy the requirements of any war

profiteer to-day, poor old George III. passed part of the clouded evening of his long reign. The rooms retain certain of their pictures—chiefly Dutch flower and bird subjects, very gloomy and congested, and a large portrait of "Farmer George," done by the famous Miss Linwood in woolwork—and there are a few pieces of dreadful ancient furniture in one of the Queen's apartments; but otherwise they are empty.

In spite of the associations of the palace—the deranged old monarch and his stuffy Charlotte of Mecklenburg-Strelitz (recollections of Fanny Burney's "Diary" and of Peter Pindar's "Lousiad" kept chasing each other through my mind) —the general feeling in it is one of cheerfulness, the result, I fancy, as much of the proportions and whiteness of the rooms as of its situation in the green sanctuary.

VII

ROYAL WINDSOR

ON a Saturday in March, when the sky was of dazzling brilliance and a wind of devilish malignancy blew from the Arctic regions, I went to Windsor, in order to compare the castle as it is with the castle as Turner saw it, and to see if it is true, as a landscape expert assures me, that the heightening of the towers has ruined it. Studying the castle from various points of view, I was consistently impressed by its adequacy, its mediæval dominance, and its satisfying solidity.

Spring being so bitterly cold, I left the streets, where there is no central heating, and where I could catch no glimpse of any one in the least like Mistress Anne Page, and took refuge first in St. George's Chapel and then in the State Apartments. The chapel as a whole grows in beauty, even though new monuments interrupt its lines. The light, coming from a sky scoured by the northern breeze, was of the most lucid, so that every detail of the lovely ceiling was unusually visible, while even in the sombre choir, with its dark stalls and hanging banners and

memorials of the Knights of the Garter, one could see almost distinctly. It is interesting to have as near London as this a sacred building so like those which we normally do not enter until we have crossed the Channel.

I was alone in the chapel, but in the State Apartments made one of a party of thirty to forty, chiefly soldiers, led round by a guide. Anything less like Harrison Ainsworth than this guide I cannot imagine; or, indeed, the inside of any castle less like the fateful and romantic fortress of that storyteller's dream. Henry VIII's suit of armour we certainly saw, but the guide's hero is a later king, George IV., who subjected every room to his altering hand. Of Herne the Hunter there was not a sign. The most sinister thing there was the bed in the Council Chamber where visiting monarchs (referred to by the guide as "The Royals") sleep, one of whom not so very long ago was the Kaiser. "I wish he was in it now," a bloodthirsty tripper muttered darkly in my ear.

The King's furniture struck me as too ornate, but he has some wonderful pictures. The guide seemed to dwell with most affection upon a landscape by Benjamin West, but I remember with more vividness and pleasure a series of portraits of Henrietta, queen of Charles I., by Van Dyck: one by the door, and two others flanking the fire-

place of the superb Van Dyck room. There is also a Rubens room containing, among many more pretentious things, a fascinating portrait of the painter's second wife and a family group devised on what was, to me, a new principle. The parents are here seen in the company of their ten children; but, if the guide is to be believed, on the original canvas only the parents and a small proportion of this brood were depicted, space being left for the insertion of the others as year by year they made their appearance. The scheme offers problems. Since the eldest child looks ten or eleven and the youngest is a baby, we must suppose (always if the guide is not misinformed) that the painter added ageing touches to the whole group at each new sitting.

When one hunts in packs there is little opportunity to examine crowded walls, and there were many pictures of which I should like to see more at leisure. Among them was a Rembrandt, a Correggio, a Titian, a Honthorst, and two Canalettos. There are the punctual carvings by Grinling Gibbons in Charles II.'s dining-room and elsewhere. Other outstanding articles are the jewelled throne once belonging to the King of Candy; the armour of the King's Champion, that obsolete but picturesque functionary; and the portraits of all the winners of Waterloo, at

home and in the field, except any private soldiers.

On leaving the castle I walked an incredible number of miles down an impeccably straight road to the equestrian statue that stands out so bravely against the sky on the hill that closes the vista: Snow Hill. The statue is of George III., and it is a fine bold thing. Not in the same class with Verrocchio's bronze horseman in Venice, or Donatello's bronze horseman in Padua, but impressive by its bigness and superior to either of those masterpieces in its site, which is not, however, so commanding as that eminence at Valley Forge which is dominated by Anthony Wayne on his metal steed. And then I found a really good confectioner's, whose first two initials correspond startlingly to my own, and, in the company of frozen Etonians not less greedy than I, ate little pots of jam until it was time to catch the train.

VIII

THREE LITTLE BACKWATERS

I WAS saying just now something in praise of the museum of London's streets: how much entertainment it offered to the eyes of soldiers on leave. But whether or not soldiers valued it, there is no such inveterate or more curious wanderer in that museum than myself, and I wish I had more time to spend in it. So many discoveries to make! I have, for example, but now stumbled upon Meard Street. I was passing through Wardour Street, and noting how the old curiosity shops are giving way to cinema companies (in the window of one of which a waxen Charlie Chaplin in regal robes is being for ever photographed by a waxen operator whose hand turns the wheel from dawn to dusk —a symbol of perpetual "motion"), when suddenly I noticed, running eastwards, a little row of pure eighteenth-century façades. It was Meard Street, and, passing along it, I examined these survivals of the London of Johnson and Sterne with delight, so well preserved are they, with their decorated portals intact, and in two or three cases the old pretty numbers still re-

maining. Why I mention Sterne is for the reason that it was in Meard Street (according to the invaluable Wheatley and Cunningham's "London, Past and Present," which sadly needs expanding) that Kitty Fourmantel, the fair friend of the author of "Tristram Shandy," lived; and it does not decrease the pleasure of dallying here to see, in fancy, the lean figure of that most unclerical of clerks in Holy Orders hurrying along to pay her his respects. Wheatley and Cunningham can tell us only of two old Meard Streetians, the other being an architect, new to me, named Batty Langley, and even then their house numbers are not given. It would be no unamusing task for an antiquary with human instincts to dig and delve until he had repeopled every residence.

My second little street — disregarded by Wheatley and Cunningham altogether—has only just come into my own consciousness: Goodwin's Court, which runs from St. Martin his lane to Bedfordbury. It is not a street at all, merely an alley, one side of which, the south, is the least Londonish row of dwellings you ever saw, and the other side is the back doors of the houses on the south of New Street—that busiest and cheerfullest of old-world shopping centres, where Hogarth's ghost still walks. New Street is famous in literature by reason of the "Pine

Apple" eating-house where Dr. Johnson in his penury dined regularly for eightpence: six-pennyworth of meat, one pennyworth of bread, and a penny for the waiter, receiving better attention than most of the clients because the penny for the waiter was omitted by them. Take it all round, New Street (which has not been new these many decades) is not so different now, the small tradesman being the last thing in the world to change.

But it was of Goodwin's Court that I was going to write, and of its odd houses—for each one is like the last, not only architecturally but through the whim of the tenants too, each one having a vast bow window, and each window being decorated with a muslin curtain, in front of which is a row of pots containing a flowerless variety of large-leaved plant, created obviously for the garnishing of such unusual spaces. Where these strange plants have their indigenous homes I cannot say—I am the least of botanists —nor do I particularly care; but what I do want to know is when their beauty, or lack of it, first attracted a dweller in Goodwin's Court and why his taste so imposed itself on his neighbours. But for this depressing foliage I should not mind living in Goodwin's Court myself, for it is quiet and central—not more than a few yards both from the West-

minster County Court and several theatres. But it would be necessary for peace of mind first to find out who Goodwin was.

My third little street, which also is an alley untrodden by the foot of horse, is not a new discovery but an old resort: Nevill's Court, running eastwards off Fetter Lane, the Nevill (if Wheatley and Cunningham tell the truth) being Ralph Nevill, Bishop of Chichester, in the thirteenth century: much of the property about here, it seems, being still in the possession of that see. The great charm of Nevill's Court is that it has, right in the midst of the printing world, gardens; within sound of countless printing presses, the Nevill Courtiers can grow their own vegetables. Each house has its garden, while the centre house, a stately double-fronted Jacobean mansion, has quite a big one. The Court has also a fruiterer's shop, presided over by one of the most genial and corpulent fruiterers—I almost wrote the fruitiest fruiterers—in the world (what a wonderful word "fruiterer" is!), and a Moravian chapel. But these things are as nothing. The most precious treasures of Nevill's Court that I observed as I walked through it one day in late February were its buds. On each shrub in each garden were authentic green buds: trustworthy promises that some day or other another spring was really

coming. And they were the first buds I had seen. It is an exciting experience, worthy of London, that one's first earnest of the renaissance should be given by a court off Fetter Lane.

IX

A SELF-MADE STATUE

NOT the least of the Zoological Gardens' many attractions is their inexhaustibility. There is always something new, and—what is not less satisfactory—there is always something old that you had previously missed. How is that? How is it that one may go to the Zoo a thousand times and consistently overlook one of its most ingratiating denizens, and then on the thousand-and-first visit come upon this creature as though he were the latest arrival?

There the quaint little absurdity was, all that long while, as ready to be seen as to-day, but you never saw him, or, at any rate, you never noticed him. The time was not yet.

Yesterday, for me, the hour of the Prairie Marmot struck.

I had been watching a group of wounded soldiers drifting round the Zoo. It was very hot, and they were bored. They stopped at each cage, it is true, but with only a perfunctory interest in most; but when suddenly one of the little free squirrels made his appearance in the middle of a path, a galvanic current ran

through them, and their visit to the Zoo became an event. Every member of the company made an individual effort to coax and conciliate the little scamp; but in vain. The squirrel had the time of its life. It went through its whole repertory of rapidities and evasions. It approached, and then, with lightning swiftness, retreated. It sat up and it crouched; it waved its tail and was waved by it. It looked a thousand ways at once. It was shy and it was bold, but it was never bold enough; no soldier, with whatever outstretched bribe, could ever quite get it. There is, however, caprice in these matters, for when a lieutenant who had been looking on stooped down and held out a nut, the squirrel instantly took it and sat perfectly still beside him while eating it.

No doubt the squirrel takes a pleasure in its capricious flirtations with danger, but certain it is that it would lose very little fun and no food at all if it were always friendly; while the joy and excitement—I am sure excitement is the word—of the lords of creation and their families who visit the Zoo would be enormously greater.

Moving on, I was conscious, for the first time, of the Prairie Marmot.

Countless are the times that I have passed the enclosure which, though the Prairie Marmot shares it with the grey squirrel, its North Ameri-

can compatriot, really belongs to neither of them, but to pigeons and sparrows. No doubt you know this enclosure; it has on one side of it the aquarium where the diving-birds pursue their live prey with such merciless zest and punctuality every day at 12 and 5, and on the other is the sculptured group of the giant negro in conflict with the angry mother of cubs.

Coming unconsciously upon this enclosure, I was suddenly aware of the oddest statuette. Pigeons, squirrels, and sparrows were moving restlessly about in the eternal quest for food, and in their midst, obviously made of stone, although coloured to resemble fur, was the rigid effigy, some ten inches high, of as comic a creature as a human artist ever designed. There this figure stood, without a flicker. And then, a small girl with a bag approaching the railings, he came to life in a flash, the perpendicular suddenly gave way to the horizontal, and he trotted down to meet her much as any other rodent would do.

The Prairie Marmot is a rat-like creature, but blunter, stockier, twice as big, and light brown in colour. The learned, of course, after their wont, know him by a lengthier and more imposing name. Dr. Chalmers Mitchell, for example, who controls the Zoo so ably and with such imagination, would never say Prairie Marmot

on those occasions when he has questions to ask as to its well-being in captivity. Nothing so commonplace. "And, by the way," he would add, having been satisfied as to the good health of the elephants and the water-beetles, the avadavats and the hartebeests,—"and, by the way, how is the *Cynomys Ludovicianus?* Does he seem to thrive? Does he prosper and multiply, or is the competition of the *Columba Londiniensis"* (meaning the Metropolitan pigeon) "too much for him?" But, whatever you call him, the Prairie Marmot remains a most ingratiating creature, and when you see him with his two tiny hands holding a monkey-nut and consuming it with eager bites you feel that it must have been for him that the well-worn phrase, "to sit up and take nourishment," was coined.

In the unimportant intervals between these two actions—this vertical eating and the sudden transformation of himself into stone, which is his greatest gift and which he does so often that he has worn his poor tail into a threadbare stump—the Prairie Marmot is of no particular interest. He just creeps about or disappears into his crater in the bank. But as his own statue—so perfect as not only to be the despair but the bankruptcy of sculptors—he is terrific. And the change is so swift. One moment he is

on all fours, and the next he is a rock, as though a magician had waved his wand.

Henceforth no visit to the Zoo will be, to me, complete without a few minutes' contemplation of the *Cynomys Ludovicianus* in his quick-change turn.

X

CROWDS—AND A BAD SAMARITAN

PRACTICAL jokers wishing to collect a crowd—and this has always been one of their choicest efforts—stand still and intent, gazing upwards. Even before the aeroplane was invented no lure was so powerful as this. In a few minutes hundreds of people will assemble, all looking up, while the humorist melts away. Probably were London a city of the blind there would be no concourses at all, for it is to see that brings us together. Crowds are always looking.

I came upon two little compact knots of people the other day, in both of which I was struck by the unanimity with which every eye was, literally, fixed on the same object. Both crowds consisted wholly of men: twenty-five perhaps, watching, in Aldwych, a girl motor-mechanic at work on a broken car; while close by, another knot surrounded a Human Marvel—a red-headed boy who, lacking arms, had trained his feet to inscribe moral sentiments in coloured chalks on a slate; which, for feet, is a marvellous thing.

As I watched all these people with hungry eyes and time to spare, I reflected on the generosity of this great London of ours in the matter of side-shows, so that there is always something for the loiterer to look at. During the War the soldier on leave, with too much time on his hands and no British Museum to beguile him (for it was then closed), having to find his own British Museum in the streets, was rarely disappointed of entertainment. Armless Wonders may be rare, but there was certain to be a road-mender at work in one spot and a horse down in another, so all was well! As for me, I like to become a member of a crowd as much as anybody, but the Armless Wonder's poor toes looked so desperately cold on this particular nipping day that sheer personal discomfort urged me onwards. But for that I might be there still.

The temper of crowds indicates that mankind in the lump is genial stuff. When standing among our fellows, watching whatever "cynosure" has been provided by the Mother of Cities, even the worst of us become innocent: very children for inquisitiveness. Our community of curiosity leads to such an extreme as the exchange of remarks. The mere fact that two strangers are looking at the same thing, though it be only an asphalt-boilers' cauldron,

brings them into harmony, and for the moment (or hour and a half) they are not strangers but friends. Then, at last tearing themselves away, they freeze again. Alas, for this tearing away! The saddest thing about every crowd is that it has, some time, some day, to dissolve. Roads are mended, horses get on their legs again, men recover from fits. Hence eyes that arrived expectant sooner or later will be satiated. That is our tragedy.

But crowds, although normally amiable, can be ugly too, and very changeable. A friend of mine, who is of a high adventurous impulsiveness and brimming with humanity, had a taste of the mob's caprice, when from sheer kindheartedness he assumed one evening, in Piccadilly Circus, the care of a homing Scotch soldier who, in an expressive idiom, had become by reason of too much conviviality "lost to the wide."

Never was a brave warrior more in need of a helper, and my friend threw himself into the task with a zest and thoroughness that should place him high in any decently-constructed Honours List. With infinite difficulty the journey to Euston was performed, by lift and tube, by pullings and pushings, by shakings and holdings-up, by entreaty and threat.

But a point was reached, in the station it-

self, where the man lay down with a supernatural solidity that no outside effort could affect. Such efforts as had to be made were the signal for the crowd to arrive, and arrive it did. So far, however, from giving my friend any assistance or sympathy, let alone admiration for his quixotry and public spirit, this particular crowd instantly took hold of the situation by the wrong handle and assumed an attitude of hostility and censure. "Hitting him when he's down!" said one. "I call it disgusting," said another, "giving soldiers drink like that." "That's a nice thing, to make the poor fellow drunk!" said a third. "Ought to be ashamed of himself," said a fourth, "giving drink to our brave lads!"—and the chorus grew.

My friend tells me that he was never so astonished in his life; and truly it is a comic situation—to give up one's time and strength in order to act the Good Samaritan to an unfortunate victim, and then be accused of being the victimizer. He was angry then, but he laughs now, and I wish you could hear him tell the story.

XI

BEFORE AND AFTER

TO my astonishment I could find no trace of the old publishing house which I had so often visited; nothing but scaffolding and boardings. Like so many London premises it had "come down" almost in a night. But my resentment was a little softened when looking through the chinks between the boards I discovered that the supplanting building was to be a theatre. I could see the bare bones of an auditorium, the deep foundations for the stage and so forth. And as I stood peering there I tried to realise some of the excitement and fun which were to be engendered among those girders and stones, so soon to be animated by that blend of mirth and thrills which makes a theatrical night's entertainment? To-day the place was a wilderness; to-morrow crowds would be gathered there. How bright would be the lights, how gay the music, how the walls, now mere skeletons, would echo and re-echo to laughter and applause!

All new building is exciting, but there was something peculiarly attractive in the thought that this great hole in the ground was, when ul-

timately enclosed by its bricks and mortar and decoration, to be a friendly playhouse.

What so cheerless as iron girders and scaffold poles? What so enkindling as the overture to a play in a crowded, anticipatory theatre?

As I stood at the opening in the hoarding, thinking these thoughts and becoming every moment an object of deeper suspicion to a watchful constable, it was borne in upon me that I had not so very long ago witnessed the very antithesis of the present scene. I say not so very long ago, meaning distance in time; only three or four years. But in history a distance vast indeed; for that was before the War, in the spacious days when travellers could leave England on an impulse, as they can no more, and passports were seldom needed, and France was gay, and Italy was careless, and Louvain had a library, and sovereigns were made not of paper but of gold. Strange, remote Utopian period! At that time when I had so different a spectacle before my eyes, I was in that beautiful land where decay is lovely too—I mean, of course, Italy—and the particular part of Italy was the brown city of Verona, at which I was stopping for a few hours on the way from Venice, to see the ruins of the Roman theatre.

These ruins can for several reasons very easily be overlooked by travellers. One is that the

lure of the Coliseum is so powerful; another, that the wonderful church of S. Zeno must first be visited, and there is then often little time for anything else but the tombs of the Scaligers and poor Juliet's reputed last earthly tabernacle. The Roman theatre, moreover, is rather out of the way; and, well, is not the Coliseum Roman theatre enough? So you see how easy it is not to do Verona full justice. And a further obstacle to the examination of the theatre's ruins is that they demand agility and endurance in no meagre supply, for one has to climb to great heights, and leap chasms and descend perilously, like a mountain goat. And Verona is usually exceedingly hot.

Yet no one visiting Verona should miss this ghost of a playhouse, for, having seen it, another gap in one's mental picture of Roman civilisation is filled. It is there possible to visualize the audience arriving, traversing the long passages in search of their seats, recognising their friends, jesting in their saturnine way, and then sitting down to the joys of the performance. Terence and Plautus at Westminster thereafter should become twice as interesting.

Ruined as it is, the theatre yet retains enough for the imagination to build upon, and it illustrates, too, the stationary character of dramatic architecture. Upon the ancient scheme our

modern erectors of theatres have grafted only trifling inessential modifications; the main lines are the same. Possibly if anything, there has been a decline, for one thinks of a Roman architect as being thorough enough to test the view of the stage from every point of the house, whereas in England there are, I am sure, architects who have never thought it worth while to visit the gallery.

Given the opportunity of mingling in some supernatural way with a crowd of the past there would be many selections as to the most thrilling moment. This one would choose the occasion of Marc Antony's oration over Cæsar's body, that the execution of Robespierre; a third would vote for a general's triumph at Athens; a fourth for Nelson's funeral at St. Paul's; and still another, greatly daring, might name a certain trial scene in Jerusalem. These, however, represent the choice of the specialists in human emotions and historic *frissons*. Many of the more ordinary of us would, I conjecture, elect to join the crowd of the past at the play; for what, they would hold, could be more interesting than to make one of the audience at the first night of "Hamlet," or "Le Bourgeois," or "Cato" or "She Stoops to Conquer," or "The School for Scandal"? Whether the differences or resemblances to ourselves would be the more striking is a question;

but I fancy the resemblances. And I fancy that such would still be the case could one be spirited back across the centuries and be set down in this Verona theatre at some gala performance. For human nature's reluctance to change is never more manifest than in the homes of the drama, and the audience in this embryonic playhouse in the London street whose name escapes me and the audience in that crumbling abode of lizards beneath the burning sun of Verona would probably be astonishingly alike.

XII

THE GREEN AMONG THE GREY

THE London plane has a special advantage over other trees in growing where it is most wanted. The maimed elms of Kensington Gardens, for example, grow where already there is a waste of greenery, but the plane trees which I have particularly in my mind at this moment grow among bricks and brush the sides of houses with their branches. From a balloon the leaves of these trees, making—from that altitude, immediately above—verdant pools among the red and grey of the roofs, must strike the eye very soothingly. In no balloon have I ever set foot, and hope not to, but having ascended St. Paul's and other eminences I am familiar with something of the same effect.

Looking down on London from a great height in the City—from the Monument, say—the impression received is a waste of blackened grey with infrequent and surprising spots of herbage to lighten it. Looking down on London from a great height in the West-end—from the

campanile of the Westminster Cathedral, for instance—the impression is of greenness first and dark grey after, for almost immediately below are St. James's Park and Green Park and the gardens of Buckingham Palace, and, quite near, the rolling acres of the Hyde. That is in summer. In winter the City prospect changes, for since most of its green is the green of the leaf, little but the blackened grey is left through the smoke. The western prospect, however, remains much the same, although more sombre, for most of its green is the green of grass. If one would see both scenes at their smilingest, but particularly the City, climb the Monument (it has only 345 of the steepest steps) in mid May. For London's green in mid May is the country's green in mid June, such a hurry is the Old Lady in.

I am not sure that the occasional glimpses of her trees are not the best. The parks can be perhaps a shade too monotonously green: they are too big; they might be in the country; but the delicate branches that feel for the light among the masonry have a quality all their own, given to them largely by contrast.

How soon this forest city of ours would revert to the wild, if only her citizens ceased to fret her and keep Nature under, we had a chance of learning when the Aldwych site was laid bare

some few years since. Instantly from the ruins sprang a tangle of vegetation, with patches of flowers among it, rooting themselves in a mysterious way in nothing more nutritious than mortar, to the bewilderment and despair of all passing gardeners who with such pains and patience coax blossoms to flourish in prepared soil. Perhaps an even more striking instance of the fertility of London stone was observable when the Stamford Bridge ground was reopened towards the end of the War for the American baseball matches, and we found that, left to their own devices, the raised platforms, all of solid concrete, had become terraced lawns.

But the plane tree, who is my hero at the moment, awaits his eulogy. It is as though Nature, taking pity on commercial man, had given him this steady companion on his lonely money-making way: "Go," said she to the plane tree, "and befriend this sordid duffer. No matter how hard the ground, how high the surrounding houses, how smoke-covered the sun, how shattering the traffic, how neglectful the passers-by, I will see that you flourish. It is your mission to alleviate the stones. You shall put forth your leaves early and hold them late to remind the money-maker that life is sweet somewhere, and to cheer him with the thought that some day,

when he has made enough, and come to his senses, he may breathe sweet air again." [1]

Nature's choice was very wise, for the plane tree, above all others, seems to have the gift of distributing a pervading greenness. As well as being green itself, it tinges the circumambient atmosphere with green. If one doubts this, let him visit Pump Court in the Temple, where two trees absolutely flood with leaves a parallelogram of masonry. But if Pump Court is more than lit by two plane trees, Cheapside in the summer takes heart from one only—that famous tree which springs from a tiny courtyard at the corner of Wood Street, and, although lopped back almost to a sign-post some few years ago, is again a brave portent of the open world to all the merchants of Chepe and their customers. It has been suggested that it was the greenness of this tree, a century and more earlier, that at this same Wood Street corner set Wordsworth's Poor Susan upon her dream of rural joys. Whether it is old enough for that, I know not; but I like the idea.

Such is the value of her ground that London City proper has necessarily to be content with minute oases, and travelling eastwards one must

[1] Honour where honour is due; and Nature, it must be admitted, has very valuable allies in the Metropolitan Public Gardens Associations.

go a long way before one comes to a real expanse comparable with the pleasures of the west. The cemetery of Bunhill Fields is the largest until Victoria Park is reached—that really necessary park which has such hard usage that there are acres of it without a blade of grass left. Here the East both apes the West and instructs it. There is one lake here on which rowing boats incessantly ply, and a motor launch used to make continual trips round an island with a Japanese temple on it for a penny a voyage; and there is another lake where thousands of little East-end boys bathe in the summer all day long. Now, the Serpentine in Hyde Park never had a motor launch, and bathing is allowed in it only before breakfast and at eve.

The best known of London's parks come where they are not wanted exceedingly. Hyde and St. James's and the Green Park and Kensington Gardens are all open spaces in areas where the streets are wide and the rooms large and light, and the poor can use and enjoy them only by walking some distance to do so and then would probably rather be on Hampstead Heath with its absence of restrictions. But Victoria Park is emphatically the right park in the right place. The West-enders, even without their parks, would still be healthy and moderately happy; but Victoria Park must literally

have kept thousands upon thousands of children alive. So, to a smaller extent, must Battersea Park. And not long ago there was a movement afoot—now perhaps only suspended—to make yet another park where it is wanted: at Shadwell, on the site of a disused fish market adjoining the river and the docks, where the curiously squalid homes of Wapping may send forth their children for sun and air. The idea was to link the park with the memory of King Edward VII., and there could not be a wiser or more beneficent scheme. It is one, moreover, which he with his practical sympathy would have been the first to support. This park, if it becomes a reality, will be in one way the best of them all, for it will have a frontage on the busy part of the Thames, below the Pool, to give the children the sight of the great ships going by and thus unlock the world for them.

Victoria Park's very special attraction, to me, is its bathing lake: one of the wonderful sights of London which very few central Londoners and no Americans have even seen. Here boys rollick and frolic in their thousands, all stark and all more than happy, with the happiness that has to be expressed by action—in shouts and leaps and pursuit. On the hot August afternoon that I was last there, the sun, sinking through a haze, turned these ragamuffins to

merboys and their skin to glory. The water is surrounded by trees; so that the mean and grimy streets which gave these urchins forth and were waiting to reclaim them again might have been as remote as Japan.

It was not only the most surprising spectacle —there, in the East-end—but the completest triumph of nakedness I ever dreamed of, for with nakedness had come not only beauty, but an ecstasy and irresponsibility as of the faun. "Time has run back and fetched the Age of Gold," I murmured as I watched them in their joy, gleaming and glistening. And then, half an hour after, as I sat by the path outside this enchanted pool and watched them returning home, with their so lately radiant bodies covered with dirty clothes, and their little sleek, round heads shapeless with half-dried hair, and the horse-play of the arid park taking the place of the primeval gaieties and raptures of the water, I knew that the Age of Gold had passed.

XIII

THE FATHERLY FORCE

LONDON may be "the stony-hearted step-mother" that De Quincey called her but Londoners are not necessarily neglected orphans because of that. So long as one policeman remains, we shall never be fatherless.

If I were Miss Jane Taylor of Ongar I should put the following questions into melodious and easily-memorised verse; but instead they are in prose. Who is it, when we are lost, that tells us the way, always extending an arm as he does so? The policeman. Who is it that knows where the nearest chemist's is? The policeman. Who, when we are in danger of being run over if we cross the road, lifts a hand like a York ham and cleaves a path for us? The policeman. At night, when we have lost the latch-key, who is it that effects an entrance (I borrow his own terminology) through a window? The policeman. The tale of his benefactions is endless.

Two American girls recently in London spent much of their time in pretending to an igno-

rance of the city, entirely (they confessed) in order to experience the delight of conversing with constables; and a lady once told me that the nicest men she had ever met (and she saw them every week) were the policemen in the Lost Umbrella Office on the Embankment. I believe it. I have the same feeling when I go there, and it bewilders me, remembering these fascinating officials, to think that the Foreign Office ever has any difficulty in appointing Ambassadors. Yet these too, with all their sympathy and suavity and sweet reasonableness, are policemen *au fond.* For the dark blue uniform is very powerful and every man who dons the white worsted glove finds his hand turning to iron beneath it. Whatever he may have been before the Force absorbed him, he will henceforward side with order against disorder, with respectability against Bohemianism, with sobriety against vinous jollity. And yet the policemen make their allowances. I watched four of them the other day frog-marching a very "voilent" (as they always say in their evidence the next morning) reprobate from Burleigh Street to Bow Street. During the struggle he distributed some vicious kicks, but I could not determine by the constables' attitude, though they would, no doubt, have preferred a more tractable captive, that they felt any grudge

towards him or thought him any worse than a meeker delinquent.

Although in real life the policeman is so monumentally respectable and solid, on the stage he is never anything but comic. *A kiss for Cinderella* to some extent qualifies this; for the constable there with the "infalliable" system was romantical as well. But, generally speaking, a policeman's part is a comic part, and must be so. Tradition is too strong for anything else. Too many clowns in too many harlequinades have wreaked their mischievous will on him. Hence, whatever the play, directly we see him we begin to laugh; for we know that though the uniform is honourable the voice will be funny. But in real life the police are serious creatures, while during the first three days of Armistice week, when they had to stand by and watch all kinds of goings-on for which no one was to be whopped, they were pathetic, too. Seldom can they have been so unhappy as when the bonfire was burning in the middle of Cockspur Street, and nothing could be done, or was permitted to be done.

London, I maintain, has few sublimer sights than a policeman doing his duty. I saw one yesterday. The window of the room which is principally devoted to my deeds of inkshed looks upon a point where four roads meet, on three

of which are omnibus routes. This means that there is never any lack of moving incident whenever I look out. Sometimes there is a moving accident, too. Yesterday, for example, hearing a warning call and a crash, I was at the window in time to see an omnibus and a small wagon inextricably mixed, and to watch with what celerity a crowd can assemble. But it was not that which drew the eye; it was the steady advance from a distant point of one of our helmeted fathers. He did not hurry: nothing but pursuit of the wicked fleeing makes a policeman run; but his onset was irresistible. Traffic rolled back from him like the waters of the Red Sea. When he reached the scene of trouble, where the motor-driver and the driver of the wagon were in ecstasies of *tu quoque,* while the conductor was examining the bonnet for damage and the passengers were wondering whether it was better to wait and work out their fares or change to another bus—when he reached the scene of trouble, he performed an action which never fails to fascinate me: he drew forth his pocket-book. There is something very interesting in the way in which a policeman does this. The gesture is mainly pride, but there is misgiving in it, too: the knowledge that the pen is not as mighty as the truncheon. But the pride is very evident: the satisfaction of Matter

being seen in association with Mind, like a voter whose hand has been shaken in public by a titled candidate. Policemen as a rule are laborious writers, and this one was true to type, but there is none that comes nearer the author of the Book of Fate. What a policeman writes, goes.

One of the best stories of the fatherliness of the Fatherly Force that I ever heard was told to me by that elvish commentator on life, and most tireless of modern Quixotes, the late Robert Ross, Oscar Wilde's devoted friend. He brought it, oddly enough, from Russia, and, when I urged him to write it, with characteristic open-handedness he presented it to me.

The heroine was a famous member of the Russian Imperial Ballet who, though she had not then danced in London—her genius being too precious in her own country—had been here unprofessionally as a sightseer; and it was here that the adventure which is the foundation of this narrative befell. From her own lips, at a supper party in St. Petersburg or Moscow, Ross had the tale, which now, but lacking all his personal enrichments, I tell again.

The dancer when in London had witnessed one of our processions: the opening of Parliament, the Lord Mayor's Show—I can't say what—and she had found herself at a disadvantage

in the crowd. It is unusual for *premières danseuses* to be tall, even when they are poised on the very tips of their conquering toes; and this lady was no exception. The result was that she could not see, and not to be able to see is for any woman a calamity, but for a foreign woman a tragedy: particularly so when she is in her own country a queen, accustomed to every kind of homage and attention. The *ballerina* was at the height of her despair when one of the policemen on duty took pity on her, and lifting her in his arms held her up long enough to enjoy the principal moments of the pageant. From that day onwards, she said, the London policeman was, for her, the symbol of strength and comfort and power. Gigantic Cossacks might parade before her all day, but her true god out of the machine was from Scotland Yard. . . .

A time came when, to the grief of her vast public, she fell ill. The Tsar's own physicians attended her, but she became no better, and at last it was realised that an operation was inevitable. Now, an operation is an ordeal which a *première danseuse* can dread with as much intensity as any one else, and this poor little lady was terrified. Empresses of the ballet should be exempted from such trials. No, she vowed, she

could never go through with it. The idea was too frightening.

"But," said the first physician, "you must. It will only be a slight affair; you will come out of your convalescence better than before."

"Yes," said the second physican, "and more beautiful than before."

"And," urged the third physician, "more popular than before."

"And," added the surgeon, "you will live for ever."

But she still trembled and refused. . . . It was impossible, unthinkable. . . .

What then?

Well, let me say at once that, as a matter of fact, she underwent the operation with perfect fortitude, and it was a great success. But how do you think she brought herself to face it? Only by tightly holding the white gloved hand of a specially constructed doll of massive, even colossal, proportions, dressed in the uniform of a London policeman.

XIV

MY FRIEND FLORA

"HOW much is this bunch?" I asked of the flower-woman at the corner.

"A shilling," she replied, "but you can have it for sixpence. I hate the sight of it."

Now here was an oddity in a world of self-centred, acquisitive tradespeople: a dealer who decried her own wares. Obviously flower-women can have temperaments.

I asked her what there was about palm, as we call those branches of willow with the fluffy, downy buds on them, that so annoyed her.

"It's such stupid stuff," she explained. "I can understand people buying daffodils or tulips or violets, because they're pretty or sweet, but not this dried-up stuff with the little kittens."

The remark set me wondering to what extent dealers in other articles are perplexed by their customers' preferences. (Some milliners, I hope.) For the most part we are encouraged by the shopkeeper to follow our own inclinations. His taste may be utterly different, but he doesn't impose it on us; he ventures to suggest

only when there are varying prices and we seem unduly inclined to the lowest. But this old lady was prepared, long before the bargaining stage had set in, to knock off fifty per cent. and traduce the goods as well. Surely a character.

"And that's not all," she added. "What do you think a lady—calls herself a lady—said to me just now when she bought threepennyworth? She said it lasted a year. Fancy telling a poor flower-woman that!"

We went on to talk of her calling. I found her an "agreeable blend" (as the tobacconists say) of humour and resignation; and very practical.

"Why are your flowers," I asked her, "so much better than the flowers of the man the other side of the road?"

"Because he takes his home at night," she said. "You should never do that. If I've got any unsold I leave them at the fire-station and then they're fresh in the morning. But I don't often have any left over."

This was, I should say, a day of acute discomfort: it had been bitterly raining since early morning, and yet there was no bitterness in the flower-woman. She was merely resigned. Very damp, but cheerfully apathetic. "When it's cold and wet like this," I asked, "is life worth living?"

"Of course," was her splendid answer; "aren't there the nights?"

Rather fine that—even if as a commentary on the wakeful hours a little acid. And for those who can sleep, how true! "Aren't there the nights?" I must remember the solace when next the cynic or the misanthrope girds at sunless noons.

Of her philosophy she then gave me another taste, for, observing a great mass of loose coins, many of them silver, lying in the basket, I asked if she were not afraid of a thief snatching at it. "Oh, no," she said. "But I don't always have it there. It's because it's so wet to-day. Counting helps."

My guess would have been that although the life of flower-women calls for philosophy, for philosophy to respond is by no means the rule; and her consolation and cheerfulness made me very happy. Yet what a penance much of their lives must be! First of all, there is the weather. Wet or fine, hot or cold, they must be out in it, and stationary at that. What to place second and third I do not know, but there is the perishable character of the stock-in-trade to be considered, and, when fogs and frosts interfere, the chance of being unable to collect any stock-in-trade at all. But exposure must be the crucial strain.

The whole question of this motionless, receptive attitude to the elements is interesting to me, who catch cold several times a day. How these people can stand it is a constant mystery. That blind man, for instance, at the little door of the Temple just below the Essex Street archway—ever since I can remember London he has been there, with his matches, always placid, no matter what new buffetings Heaven has for him.

The blind in particular seem to become indifferent to climatic extremes; and there must be in every one's cognizance two or three immovable sightless mendicants defying rain and chill. Every town in the country has such landmarks, and all seem to retain their health. But I recollect that the blind man who used to sit in front of the Grand Hotel at Brighton forty years ago spelling out Holy Writ, while the dog at his feet collected coppers in a little box, always in winter wore mittens and a cap with earflaps, and had fingers red and swollen. Still, he endured. Whether with those red and swollen fingers he really deciphered the Evangel or merely repeated from memory, we never knew, but I can still hear the droning voice, "And Jesus said——"

This insensitiveness to January blasts and February drenchings may be one of the compensations that the blind enjoy. Whatever

else happens to them they never, perhaps, catch cold. And that is more than something.

But how odd that these stolid, shabby, and often rather battered old florists should be the middle-men and middle-women between the country and the city, but for whose indifference to pitiless skies so many town-dwellers would never see a blossom at all! There is nothing of the country about them, nothing of the garden—almost no Londoner less suggests the riot of a herbaceous border—and yet it is they who form the link between flower-bed and street.

"Well," I said, grasping the bunch of palm that the old flower-woman had sold me at such a sacrifice, "good-bye; I hope you'll empty your basket."

"And I hope you'll empty yours," she replied.

"Mine?" I said, "I haven't got one."

"Oh, yes, you have," said Flora; "every one's got a basket, only they don't always know where to take it."

THE END

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